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‘DOWN WITH IT, EVEN TO THE GROUND’:
WILLIAM DOWSING’S RECEPTION OF THE ICONOCLASTIC RATIONALE

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me, that the research it contains is my own, and that none of it has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Timothy A. Bridges

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Abstract

Caricatured as the Arch Vandal, William Dowsing (bap. 1596-1668) was a farmer and a soldier who entered into history as a radical figure in the English Civil War between Charles I and the Long Parliament. The Earl of Manchester commissioned Dowsing to tear down ‘pictures and superstitious images’ in the name of God and a parliamentary ordinance of 1643. The commission grew out of a series of puritan reform measures which aimed to overthrow the ‘popish innovations’ implemented in part by Archbishop William Laud in the 1630s. Dowsing’s iconoclastic campaign resulted in controversial visitations to churches, colleges and chapels throughout Cambridgeshire and Suffolk in 1643-44. This thesis engages with previous scholarship on William Dowsing and makes a distinct contribution by constructing a series of dialectics that framed the rationale for his iconoclasm. Much of the research on William Dowsing is predominately historical, cultural, or political because scholars have typically considered Reformed iconoclasm ‘from above’ as a phenomenon that occurred during times of religious upheaval. This project offers a historical/theological treatment of Dowsing and his civil war iconoclasm. The objective is to penetrate the puritan movement and to explore iconoclastic thought ‘from within’.

The thesis accomplishes this goal through indirect and direct methods. The indirect approach involves an examination of Dowsing’s ‘puritan’ culture in Suffolk (Chapter Two) and attitudes relative to images within Reformed Orthodoxy in England in the mid-seventeenth century (Chapter Three). Several key primary sources sustain the more direct approach. Trevor Cooper’s recent edition of Dowsing’s journal, in which Dowsing recorded events from his campaign, paved the way for a new assessment of iconoclastic thought. This thesis examines the journal for its theological implications (Chapter Four) rather than attempting to restate the narrative of Dowsing’s itinerary. While the journal is crucial to a proper understanding of Dowsing’s rationale, the most direct category of evidence emerges from a study of Dowsing’s habits of reading and annotation (Chapter Five). Dowsing heavily annotated his six-volume collection of sermons preached to the Long Parliament between 1640-46. This study delineates the competing realities perceived by puritan preachers in the 1640s, as picked up by William Dowsing’s annotations (Chapter Six). In many ways, the preachers believed that iconoclasm played a tactical role in the overall strategy to secure a favorable outcome for the ‘godly’. Their sermons envisaged idealized religious conditions juxtaposed with the threat of divine retribution

for idolatry in England. The iconoclast's annotations show that the preachers' doctrines echoed beyond the House of Commons to resonate within the houses of common people like Dowsing. This research is important because it highlights the often neglected area of lay engagement with the corporate puritan rationale for Reformation in the civil war period.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Approaching the Iconoclast

I. A Visit to Linstead Parva

Monday 4 April 1644 was a day of destruction in the quiet parish church of Linstead Parva.¹ On the previous day, the Sunday after Easter, parishioners had gathered in the church for worship. The Lord's Day came and went without incident. However, at some point on Monday a group of men entered the grounds. They surveyed the scene as their leader entered the sanctuary beneath a steeple which bore an engraving of Christ nailed to the cross. Once inside, the leader discovered an image of 'God the Father, and of Christ'. He glanced around only to find five more 'superstitious' pictures. With his targets in sight, the supervisor ordered the men to take up their cudgels and set to work. The man in charge made notes in his journal:

Linstead Parva, April 4. A picture of God the Father and of Christ, and five more superstitious in the chancel; and the steps to be leveled, which the churchwardens promised to do in 20 days. And a picture of Christ on the outside of the steeple, nailed to a cross, and another superstitious one. Crosses on the font.

Monday's destruction could not have been more dissimilar to Sunday's hushed refrains. Acts of iconoclasm like those of 4 April 1644 raised questions that historians and theologians have attempted to answer in the centuries that followed. Intriguing questions centre on the man who led this particular destructive visit and wrote the details in his journal. His name was William Dowsing. Just what did he hope to gain from such seemingly wanton destruction?

A partial answer to that question comes from Dowsing's reading material for the day. Tucked somewhere in his belongings – in his pack, or his pocket – was a published copy of a sermon Stephen Marshall had preached a few months earlier to Parliament, *A Sacred Panegyrick* (1644). Dowsing's notation on the final page of Marshall's text reveals that he read this sermon

¹ Years are indicated as beginning 1 January.

on the same date as his visit to Linstead Parva. He marked several passages in the body of Marshall's text, including these words:

It is for the Lord Christ and the purity of religion, which the Enemy would deprive thee of together with thy civil Liberties; never could it goe so honourably, so nobly for his glory, and thy owne comfort: Goe on therefore, I beseech you all and carry on the worke [of Reformation], and for your incouragement, remember and observe how the Lord your God goeth before you, observe him in all his goings, how he watcheth over you every day ... one that pleads against you, the Lord pleads against him.²

On the final page of the sermon, the iconoclast also neatly wrote his initials: 'W.D.'

II. Historical Overview

A more complete answer to the question of the iconoclast's identity and what rationale drove his iconoclasm is complex and linked to many of the theological and social clashes that occurred in seventeenth century England. Approximately seven months before 'W.D.' unleashed his destructive force in the sanctuary of Linstead Parva, the Long Parliament took measures to reform worship in England. On 28 August 1643 MPs enacted *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament; For the Utter Demolishing, Removing and Taking Away of All Monuments of Superstition or Idolatry*.³ In the previous decade, Charles I and Archbishop William Laud had led efforts to adorn parish churches and college chapels with religious images

² Stephen Marshall, *A Sacred Panegyrick, or a Sermon of Thanks-Giving, Preached to the Two Houses of Parliament, His Excellency the Earl of Essex, the Lord Major, Court of Alderman, and Common Councill of the City of London, the Reverend Assembly of Divines, and Commissioners from the Church of Scotland. Upon Occasion of Their Solemn Feasting, to Testifie Their Thankfullnes to God, and Union and Concord One with Another, after So Many Designes to Divide Them, and Thereby Ruine the Kingdome, January 18. 1643* (London: Printed for Stephen Bowtell, and are to be sold at his shop at the sign of the Bible in Popes-head-alley, 1644), p. 20. Future references to Dowsing's six-volume collection of sermons will include the volume number, sermon number within the volume, and appropriate page number(s). See Appendix One for a table showing the iconoclast's schedule of sermon reading.

³ *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament; for the Utter Demolishing, Removing, and Taking Away of All Mounuments of Superstition or Idolatry, out of the Churches and Chapels within This Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, before the First Day of November* ([London]: Printed for Edward Husbands, 1643).

and ‘beautified altars’.⁴ These ecclesiastical policies gave rise to a wave of unofficial iconoclasm in 1641 and were arguably a major factor leading to the civil war between Charles I and Parliament in 1642. Parliament’s first attempt to remove ‘innovations in or about the worship of God’ in hopes of restoring ‘the public peace’ came in an ordinance passed in the House of Commons in September 1641.⁵ This ordinance was chiefly concerned with the ‘beautified altars’ that had become commonplace in the 1630s. By the time William Dowsing visited Linstead Parva the vast majority of the altars had already been ‘reformed’ according to puritan standards of simplicity. The ordinance of 1643 was a further attempt to rectify these ‘Laudian innovations’ but represented the broader goal of removing the ‘monuments of superstition’ that had somehow survived the Reformation fervour of the sixteenth century. A third ordinance, passed in May 1644, attempted to reinvigorate the ‘Reformation so happily begun’ with a renewed call for the destruction of ‘offences and things illegal to the worship of God’.⁶ While the Long Parliament’s action on 28 August 1643 was not an anomaly, the iconoclasm precipitated by the ordinance created a particular point of controversy in subsequent generations. The Suffolk puritan William Dowsing – W.D. – is inextricably linked with that controversy.

Remembered by some as the Arch Vandal,⁷ William Dowsing (bap. 1596-1668) was a farmer and a soldier who entered into history as a radical figure in the English Civil War

⁴ Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵ *An Ordinance of the House of Commons 28 September 1641* (London: by Robert Barker printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie: and by the assignes of John Bill, 1641).

⁶ *An Ordinance for the Further Demolishing of Monuments of Idolatry and Superstition* (London: Printed for John Wright, 1644).

⁷ This appellation is from the title of an article by Jeremy Hill on the The Colne-Stour Countryside Website, http://www.colnestour.org/william_dowsing.htm. In the article, Dowsing is described as a ‘fanatical, pedantic, legalistic and self-righteous ... Philistine’ who carried out his work ‘without the slightest consideration for the damage he was doing to his country’s heritage’. For a decidedly positive view of Dowsing see James F. White, “A Good Word for William Dowsing,” *Theology Today* 18, no. 2 (1961).

between Charles I and Parliament. The Earl of Manchester commissioned Dowsing to enforce the changes called for in the ordinance of 1643. Many church officials considered Manchester's commission illegal since Parliament made no provision for appointing soldiers to carry out the ordinance. Yet Manchester and Dowsing understood the ordinance as a license to tear down 'pictures and superstitious images' in the name of God and Parliament. The result was an iconoclastic campaign that stretched through parishes in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk between 1643 and 1644.

Dowsing is often thought of as an Elmer Gantry who mindlessly opposed vice with no thought deeper than demolition. In the introduction to a nineteenth century edition of Dowsing's journal, Evelyn White remarked 'so uninviting a character, and one we are led instinctively to condemn, is scarcely worthy of anything likely to further perpetuate his memory, beside that which we already possess in the well-known Journal'.⁸ J.G. Cheshire pronounced judgment on Dowsing, calling his work 'sacrilegious'.⁹ Margaret Aston wrote, 'The name of William Dowsing has become a by-word for Puritan destruction.'¹⁰ As recently as 2003, Diarmaid MacCulloch described Dowsing's 'vandalistic East-Anglian church crawls' as 'odious'.¹¹ However, other recent scholarship presents a more nuanced picture of the iconoclast. Trevor Cooper's edition of the journal in which Dowsing recorded the events of his campaign portrays the iconoclast as a more three-dimensional figure. The supplementary essays and appendices in

⁸ *The Journal of William Dowsing of Stratford, Parliamentary Visitor, Appointed under a Warrant from the Earl of Manchester, for Demolishing the Superstitious Pictures & Ornaments of Churches, &c. Within the County of Suffolk, in the Years 1643 - 1644, with an introduction, Notes, Etc., by the Rev. C.H. Evelyn White* (Ipswich: Pawsey and Hayes, 1885). The full text of this 1885 edition is available at http://www.archive.org/stream/journalofdowsing00whituoft/journalofdowsing00whituoft_djvu.txt.

⁹ J.G. Cheshire, "William Dowsing's Destructions in Cambridgeshire," *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 3, 1914, pp. 77-91.

¹⁰ Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts Vol.1: Laws against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 74.

¹¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 562.

Cooper's volume contribute broadly to the study of iconoclasm and iconoclasts, paving the way for a reassessment in this thesis of the puritan rationale for iconoclasm.¹²

III. Methods, Aims and Sources

Much of what is written on William Dowsing is predominately historical, cultural, or political. Scholars have typically analyzed iconoclasm 'from above' as a phenomenon endemic in Reformed theology and practice with deeper roots in medieval iconophobia. To take the discussion forward, this project offers a historical/theological treatment of Dowsing and his civil war iconoclasm. The objective is to penetrate the puritan movement and to explore iconoclastic thought 'from within'. From above, iconoclasm mystifies modern observers as a form of brutality predicated on bigotry and hatred. From within, iconoclasm appears as a moral imperative for many within the puritan community, necessary to preserve 'true worship' and a secure England. This project seeks to articulate a rationale for iconoclasm as 'the godly', Dowsing among them, perceived it. An internal perspective will help to balance negative perceptions of iconoclasm by highlighting the positive gains iconoclastic puritans hoped to achieve.

This thesis employs both indirect and direct methods to uncover William Dowsing's rationale for iconoclasm, as it related to the corporate puritan rationale for reform in the context of the English Civil War. The indirect approach entails piecing together something of the physical and mental world in which the iconoclast moved, from recent scholarship on his life and times. The direct methodology involves, in part, an investigation of key primary documents such as Manchester's commission to Dowsing and the parliamentary ordinance of 1643. The most

¹² *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War*, ed. Trevor Cooper (Woodbridge: Boydell Press in association with the Ecclesiological Society, 2001).

direct evidence, however, stems from documents personal to the iconoclast. These include his day-by-day journal of acts of iconoclasm, a letter to his friend Matthew Newcomen, a manuscript that may be Dowsing's notes of a sermon and his personal library. The most important section of Dowsing's library for this investigation is his collection of sermons preached to the Long Parliament on national 'fast days' in the 1640s. These sermons, heavily annotated by Dowsing, reveal a series of dialectics that framed his theological rationale for iconoclasm. This study describes the competing realities perceived by puritan preachers in the 1640s, and Dowsing's annotations powerfully suggest how he picked these up. The sermons to Parliament envisaged idealized religious conditions juxtaposed with the threat of divine retribution for idolatry in England. In many ways, the preachers believed that iconoclasm played a tactical role in the overall strategy to secure a favorable outcome for the 'godly'. The iconoclast's annotations show that the preachers' doctrines echoed beyond the House of Commons to resonate within the houses of common people like Dowsing.

This thesis reconstructs Dowsing's iconoclastic rationale by progressing from indirect to direct methods. Part One (Chapters Two and Three) approaches Dowsing indirectly by establishing the nature of his puritan culture in Suffolk and the Reformed tradition he inherited. Dowsing associated with radical Protestants, known commonly as 'puritans' or 'the godly'; these associations included informal godly networks and his more formal membership in the Eastern Association Army under the leadership of the Earl of Manchester. Chapter Two constructs Dowsing's Puritanism in relation to his roles as a yeoman farmer in Suffolk, as a soldier in the Eastern Association Army and as an iconoclast. Furthermore, Dowsing lived in a time that was tumultuous, theologically and socially. Chapter Three explores the theological and historical developments that culminated in Dowsing's iconoclasm. The survey follows a certain trajectory:

it begins in the generation of Calvin and Knox, travels through the thought of the Cambridge puritan William Perkins and arrives at Dowsing's iconoclasm. Chapter Three also explores how settled convictions within Reformed theology came into conflict with Laudianism in the 1630s. Part Two (Chapters Four, Five and Six) approaches Dowsing directly by examining his iconoclastic campaign and key primary documents that provide the framework of his rationale for iconoclasm. Chapter Four portrays Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign as a kind of 'kinetic Puritanism', showing how he applied iconoclastic thought in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Chapters Five and Six examine Dowsing's reading habits and the theological themes in his reading material; the iconoclast read a great deal of material from the perspective of someone with a zealous commitment to a complete Reformation 'according to the Word of God'. Finally, Chapter Seven draws together the conclusions reached in this investigation.

Although the main body of this thesis starts by approaching the topic from a broader perspective, it is important at the outset to give a sense of what sources survive to provide direct evidence of Dowsing's rationale before outlining the broader research context. Dowsing left behind documents, in his own hand, that serve as landmarks in the effort to locate his justification for iconoclasm. Dowsing's journal provides the information needed to explore both his method of destruction and the presence of Reformed thought in his rationale. Most of what we know about Dowsing's campaign comes from the journal in which he recorded the events of his iconoclastic visits. Trevor Cooper's publication of Dowsing's journal in 2001 significantly advanced the study of puritan iconoclasm. Dowsing's day by day chronicle of his acts of iconoclasm captured his attempt to reform places of worship in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, but before Cooper's edition of the journal the entries for the two counties were published separately. Since the iconoclast's original manuscript is not extant scholars rely on transcriptions which

have an interesting history of their own. The nearest surviving text to the original is an early eighteenth-century transcript.¹³ The section of the journal that records visits to churches and colleges in Cambridgeshire first came to publication in 1739 when the Cambridge historian Zachary Grey wrote to refute any glowing memories of puritan involvement in the civil wars. Part of his argument included a transcription of Dowsing's entries from Cambridge. It is not clear if he was using the original manuscript or another transcript. Around the same time, Thomas Baker, also a Cambridge historian, published part of the Cambridge entries. Again, Baker's source is unclear but his work matches Grey's almost exactly.¹⁴ Grey's and Baker's ties with Cambridge meant they were interested only in the entries that pertained to damage at Cambridge and therefore chose not to publish the record of damage in Suffolk.

The Suffolk entries in Dowsing's journal have a more convoluted history. When Dowsing died in 1668 the journal passed to his son, Samuel Dowsing. When Samuel Dowsing died the executor of his will was his half-brother William Dowsing, Jr, the younger son of the iconoclast. William Jr. sold the journal to a London bookseller, where it was transcribed by the Reverend Edward Leeds in 1704.¹⁵ Leeds' copy was copied twice. The first to copy it was a 'Rev'd. Mr. Burrough of Bradfield'. The second was Burrough's nephew, Thomas Martin of Palgrave. The Leeds and Burrough copies are no longer extant, however, the copy made by Martin provided the material for several later publications of the Suffolk entries.¹⁶ Thus, the Cambridge and Suffolk sections were transmitted quite separately until Cooper's recent efforts to publish both sections in what has now become the definitive edition of Dowsing's journal.

¹³ See Appendix 3 for images of the transcript.

¹⁴ Trevor Cooper, "History and Nature of the Journal," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 138-141. Cooper provides a diagram which traces the transmission of the Suffolk and Cambridge entries on p. 139.

¹⁵ See Appendix Three for images of this transcription.

¹⁶ See especially *The Journal of William Dowsing, of Stratford, Parliamentary Visitor Appointed ... For Demolishing the Superstitious Pictures and Ornaments of Churches, &c. Within the County of Suffolk, in the Years 1643-1644* (Woodbridge: printed by and for R. Loder, 1786). See also C.H. Evelyn White, *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History*, 6 (1885), pp. 236-295.

Cooper's edition of the journal also contains nine essays by John Morrill, John Blatchly, Robert Walker, Trevor Cooper and S.L. Sadler that serve as a preface to Dowsing's text.¹⁷ The book presents extensive data for a study of Dowsing's iconoclasm. The central argument of Cooper's book is that William Dowsing was a sincere man who approached his iconoclasm with meticulous zeal. John Morrill even described Dowsing as 'the bureaucratic puritan' because of his strict obedience to the parliamentary ordinance of 1643.¹⁸ The current study agrees that Dowsing obeyed the parameters of the parliamentary ordinance, but also stresses the theological framework that governed Dowsing's iconoclasm.

The structure of Dowsing's journal is fairly simple. A typical entry reads, 'Belstead. We brake down 7 superstitious pictures, five of the Apostles and 2 others; and took up 4 superstitious inscriptions in brass, Ora pro nobis'.¹⁹ In some entries, the language does not reflect as careful a description of the damage or the events that transpired. In Cooper's estimation, Dowsing's repetitions and sketchy details make it likely that much of the journal was 'written up haphazardly, in batches, from memory, or perhaps from rough notes on odd scraps of paper'.²⁰ However, even smaller entries reveal critical information on issues such as the limits of William Laud's influence. On 30 December, Dowsing visited Sidney College, Cambridge and noted, 'We saw nothing there to be mended'.²¹ Other longer entries convey important insight into Dowsing's own perception of his mission and his opponents' reception of his 'visitations'. For

¹⁷ Morrill's essay, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm in the Puritan Revolution" is a significant revision of "The Bureaucratic Puritan," *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. John Morrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). See also John Morrill, "Dowsing, William (bap. 1596, d. 1668)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7990> (accessed 1 October 2006).

¹⁸ Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 17. Morrill writes, 'William Dowsing was the bureaucratic puritan. If something was in the ordinance, it was removed or ordered to be removed. If it was not in the ordinance it was left behind'.

¹⁹ William Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 227, entry 74. The original spelling will be retained in all quotations from Dowsing's journal.

²⁰ Trevor Cooper, "History and Nature of the Journal," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 144.

²¹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 186, entry 14.

example, the journal contains crucial arguments which Dowsing articulated when the Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge attempted to prevent him from ‘cleansing’ their chapel.²²

Obviously, there are broken statues and damaged religious inscriptions that also testify to Dowsing’s presence in churches and chapels between 1643-44. Dowsing records in his journal the items that he destroyed, or ordered others to destroy, during his iconoclastic visits. He regularly targeted images of persons of the Trinity, the Apostles, Saints and other biblical figures. He also defaced a wide range of religious inscriptions, including those that seemed to represent a medieval/Catholic understanding of the saints’ role in the life of a believer. Trevor Cooper meticulously documented the extent of this damage in *The Journal of William Dowsing*, making only a partial rehearsal of the litany of ruined items necessary in this thesis. The information culled by Cooper helps to frame the present examination which discerns patterns and principles born out of Dowsing’s brand of Reformed theology.²³

The journal is not the only document that provides direct evidence of Dowsing’s rationale for iconoclasm. A single, but crucial, piece of Dowsing’s personal correspondence survives. That only this one letter is extant may appear limiting but, as John Morrill has noted, ‘it is perhaps the letter of his we most wanted to survive’.²⁴ On 6 March 1643 Dowsing sat down to write a letter to his friend Matthew Newcomen, a Dedham preacher with parliamentary ties. The draft of the letter, written in the iconoclast’s hand, remains on a blank page in a published

²² S.L. Sadler examined these arguments in “Dowsing’s Arguments with the Fellows of Pembroke,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 56-66. Sadler basically presented the point and counterpoint flow of the arguments without fully exploring their theological underpinnings. This thesis benefits from Sadler’s examination but takes the analysis more squarely into the realm of theology. See Chapter Four (4.IV) of this study.

²³ See *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, especially plates 49-65. For an examination of patterns and principles in Dowsing’s iconoclastic campaign see Chapter Four (4.V) of this study.

²⁴ John Morrill, “A Liberation Theology? Aspects of Puritanism in the English Revolution,” *Puritanism and Its Discontents*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), p. 37.

parliamentary fast sermon among Dowsing's impressive collection.²⁵ After reminding Newcomen to return a long-overdue book, Dowsing insisted that his friend use his influence with 'parliament men' to 'remove superstitious pictures and reliques of popery' from churches and chapels in England.²⁶ The letter also contains part of the rationale on which Dowsing based his request: he believed the presence of 'idolatry' in England demanded immediate action in order to secure the safety of the nation and the purity of the Church. Dowsing's letter to Newcomen is a key primary source that reappears regularly in this thesis. The letter is more than an interesting piece of personal correspondence. It demonstrates Dowsing's connection to a broader godly network and articulates a portion of his understanding of theological and political challenges facing puritans in the 1640s.

The iconoclast read hundreds of sermons, but possibly wrote only one. A final handwritten document will emerge as the thesis draws to a close. This four-page manuscript, which is tucked neatly into a pocket in the third volume of Dowsing's parliamentary sermon collection, could arguably be an example of Dowsing's notes on someone else's sermon. However, the length of the document makes it more likely that the page contains Dowsing's own thoughts and could possibly be a sermon manuscript composed by the iconoclast. The text of Dowsing's manuscript portrays the iconoclast in a reflective state of mind, examining contemporary events through the lens of Scripture. Dowsing's possible notes of a sermon help to cast him as a man who understood the implications of his highly controversial campaign.²⁷

²⁵ The sermon: Jeremiah Whittaker, *Eirenopoios, Christ the Settlement of Unsettled Times in a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Publicke Fast in Margarets Church at Westminster, the 25. Of January / by Jeremiah Whittaker* (London: Printed for John Bellamie, 1642). In Dowsing's collection see volume VI, sermon 3.

²⁶ See Appendix Two for an image of Dowsing's letter to Newcomen. See also Chapter Two (2.II) for a full discussion of Dowsing's ties to Newcomen.

²⁷ The manuscript is contained in Volume III of Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons. See Chapter Seven of this study for an examination of the document.

For Dowsing, his six-volume collection of fast sermons preached to the Long Parliament in the 1640s overflowed with doctrines for which an ever-watchful God would hold him accountable. This thesis examines Dowsing's sermon collection, not as mere historical documents, but as a set of powerful ideas. The sermons contain a coherent, corporate rationale for Reformation from the perspective of puritan preachers in the 1640s. Their rationale, mounted on a series of ultimatums for the godly, portrayed iconoclasm as a moral imperative. The dialectical nature of their arguments supports Peter Lake's claim that calls for reform in English Protestantism 'proceeded through a series of binary oppositions'.²⁸ The parliamentary preachers positioned themselves between two competing realities. Destroying 'popish' idols was one way to secure the more favourable reality for the godly. Dowsing's annotations show a detailed reading of, and approval for, the preachers' ideology. Although it is impossible to reconstruct Dowsing's exact thoughts as he began his campaign, careful attention to his annotations reveals something of the rationale which Dowsing took with him into the churches and chapels of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk in 1643-44. Dowsing's annotations form a crucial link between preaching and reception, idea and application.²⁹

Dowsing collected nearly all of the parliamentary fast sermons that the Houses of Parliament deemed worthy of publication in the 1640s. In all, there were 218 sermons printed from the parliamentary preaching program, of which Dowsing owned 171. He purchased 118 sermons delivered to the House of Commons, 22 sermons preached to the House of Lords and 31 Thanksgiving sermons. He read thirty-one sermons before the period of his iconoclastic

²⁸ Peter Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (Harlow: Longman, 1989), p. 73. See Chapter Two (2.I) for a discussion of this issue.

²⁹ Dowsing's entire collection of parliamentary sermons is held by the Library of the Ipswich School in Suffolk. Dowsing's original binding was removed around the turn of the twentieth century when the volumes were under the care of the Town Library of Ipswich. For some unknown reason the rebound volumes no longer correspond to Dowsing's original order. See Appendix Two for a table listing the two numbering schemes and examples of Dowsing's annotations.

campaign and four sermons during the campaign. From this information we know that he read Stephen Marshall's *A Sacred Panegyrick* on 4 April 1644, the same day he visited Linstead Parva. On the same day, he also 'cleansed' a church in 'Stradbrook' where his journal records, '[breaking down] 17 pictures in the upper window; and *Pray for such out of your charity*; and organs, which I brake'.³⁰ All of the sermons reveal much about Dowsing's priorities, but in order to illuminate the theological rationale for his iconoclasm the 35 sermons which he read before and during the campaign receive greater attention in this study.³¹

Dowsing purchased the parliamentary sermons individually, for a price usually 'between 3d. and 7d. per sermon'.³² He had a clear system for annotating the texts and often noted the purchase date and/or the reading date on the final page of a sermon. Judging from the sermons he marked with purchase dates and reading dates, he rarely allowed many days to elapse between the date he entered the bookseller's shop and the day he finished reading the text. For example, he purchased William Bridge's *Babylons Downfall* on 8 September 1641 and began reading the thirty-four page sermon on the same day, completing it the next.³³ He was equally eager to read Thomas Case's *Two Sermons Lately Preached*, which he bought on 1 November 1642 and completed reading both sermons on the purchase date. While reading a sermon, he followed the

³⁰ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 288, entry 215. Dowsing also visited churches in 'Wilby' and 'Nether, or Linstead Parva' on the same day.

³¹ Studying Dowsing's annotations is not an exact science. Almost all evidence points to Dowsing reading and annotating these sermons before or during his campaign. However, one anomaly raises the possibility of Dowsing adding some annotations at a later date. For example, a somewhat unclear annotation in Thomas Case's *Two Sermons Lately Preached* (IV.7.17), which Dowsing read on 1 November 1642 (see Appendix One) refers to a '1657' edition of a 'Historie'. If the edition date is accurate, then Dowsing made this annotation at least 13 years after the campaign. The assertion that Dowsing read and annotated these sermons before or during the campaign remains safe, however, since no other reference in our sample postdates the campaign. The reference could have been added later, it could simple error, or it could represent a '1637' edition of this unknown 'Historie'. Chapter Five discusses the rise of 'active reading' in the seventeenth-century which lends support to the notion that Dowsing read the sermons 'actively' upon first reading.

³² John Blatchly, "Dowsing's Collection of Parliamentary Sermons," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 327. Blatchly hypothesizes that Dowsing may have received a 'regular purchaser's discount'.

³³ On the final page of the text, Dowsing wrote, 'I.R. this B.1641.m.7.d.8.9.W.D. 2.Tim.2.7'. The code means 'I read this book in month 7, on days 8 and 9, William Dowsing, 2. Timothy 2.7'. September was the seventh month in the early modern calendar since the year began in March.

nuances of most arguments by writing marginalia. The arguments are easily traceable because practically all of the parliamentary sermons followed a structural formula based on the ‘plain style’ of preaching first advocated by the Cambridge puritan William Perkins (1558-1602).³⁴ The hallmarks of plain style preaching were a series of ‘doctrines’ from which the preachers drew ‘uses’ and answered ‘objections’. It was Dowsing’s habit to write all of a preacher’s doctrines on the front page of a sermon, along with corresponding page numbers. Many of Dowsing’s annotations in the sermon body simply indicate where the preacher began a new point. In these marginal notes he essentially ‘tracked’ the structure of the preacher’s arguments. More important than these structural markings is Dowsing’s constant scoring next to noteworthy passages. Notes of summary regularly accompany his marks of emphasis. The sections Dowsing highlighted with these lone annotations comprise the bulk of sermon quotations in this study.³⁵

Dowsing’s annotations in other books he owned could be quite contrary, like a petty mathematical correction in *A True Modest and Just Defense of the Petition for Reformation* (1618), but his notes in the parliamentary sermons create an atmosphere of approval.³⁶ He added very few corrections, spending most of his time absorbing the preachers’ points. In addition to the preachers’ ‘doctrines’, Dowsing also wrote on title pages pithy phrases and key thoughts. Title pages in his collection reveal Dowsing’s notes of where to find mention of theologians such

³⁴ See William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng, or, a Treatise Concerning the Sacred and Onely True Manner and Methode of Preaching First Written in Latine by Master William Perkins; and Now Faithfully Translated into English (for That It Containeth Many Worthie Things Fit for the Knowledge of Men of All Degrees) by Thomas Tuke* (Imprinted at London: By Felix Kyngston for E.E. and are to be sold in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Swan, 1607). Perkins’ plain style preaching method and his contribution to the iconoclastic rationale receive treatment in Chapter Three (3.II.iii) of this thesis.

³⁵ All of the quotations examined in Chapter Six were culled from passages marked in some way by the iconoclast. See Appendix 1 for images of Dowsing’s annotations.

³⁶ Dowsing’s copy of this book is in Dr. Williams’s [sic] Library (564.C.9). This book receives attention in Chapter Five (5.III). The ministers who submitted the *Petition for Reformation* (1618) complained that it had taken fourteen years for it to come to print. Dowsing added up the years the submission in 1608 and the publication date and noted that ‘from 1608 to 1618 is but 10 years’.

as Ignatius, Augustine, Waldus, Wycliffe, Luther, Melancthon, Zanchius, Calvin, Beza, Knox, Latimer and Perkins.³⁷ Topics of concern to the godly appear in the margins of the sermons texts, with references to ‘Idle holy days’, ‘scandalous prelates’, ‘sacraments profaned’, ‘Sabbaths profaned’, ‘idolatry’ and ‘Reformation’. For Dowsing, reading the sermons once was not sufficient. His notations show that he had the entire collection bound on 9 October 1646, well after he completed his tenure as an iconoclast. After he bound the sermons he re-read them between 14 December 1646 and 7 March 1647.³⁸ He also bequeathed the collection to his eldest son upon his death, bound in six volumes. All this shows that Dowsing held the sermons as a treasured collection.

John Wilson considered both the scope and content of the 218 parliamentary sermons printed between 1640 and 1648. He argued that the body of sermons had core themes: God’s covenant with England, the sins and signs of the times, the need for repentance and the promise of a new age.³⁹ The present study draws on Wilson’s examination of these sermons. However, Chapter Six highlights themes in Dowsing’s private collection that constitute a corporate rationale for iconoclasm among the Reformed. This investigation analyzes how the parliamentary sermons helped to shape, or affirm, the theological worldview of the iconoclast. Wilson supplied a complete calendar of the sermons’ publication dates, allowing for a comparison to Dowsing’s collection. While Wilson’s research focuses on what the preachers

³⁷ For example, the iconoclast noted references to Luther, Latimer, Augustine and Zanchius on the title page of William Bridge’s *Babylons Downfall* (1641), IV.4. See Appendix One for a list of noteworthy theologians whom Dowsing mentioned on the title page of sermons he read before and during his iconoclastic campaign.

³⁸ John Blatchly studied the reading dates closely in “Appendix 3,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 331. For example, Dowsing wrote the following code inside what is now Volume IV of his collection (Dowsing’s original Volume I): ‘I beg. thes Ser. 2d. tyme 1646 Dece’b’ 29 & end Jan. day 12.’ This meant he began re-reading this volume of sermons on 29 December 1646 and finished it on 12 January 1647 (when interpreted using modern dating; year beginning 1 January).

³⁹ John Frederick Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism During the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 168-189. See also Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), pp. 79-108. Hill placed the fast sermons in the broader context of the seventeenth century. His aim was to show how the Bible helped to shape politics and war during this period.

preached, he does not consider how puritan laity applied the published sermons. The current study explores how Dowsing, as a reader, absorbed and applied the sermons.⁴⁰

It is unusual to decipher a person's rationale based on sermons they read but did not preach. However, the vast majority of preachers selected to address the Long Parliament in the 1640s preached from a puritan perspective with which Dowsing identified. The stated aim of this project is to reconstruct a rationale for Dowsing's iconoclasm from within the puritan culture. While the parliamentary fast sermons might not contain Dowsing's own points, they do represent his point of view regarding the reform of worship. The parliamentary sermons Dowsing purchased are replete with insider language, references, fears and ideals. They are what James C. Spalding once called a 'public puritan diary'.⁴¹ Chapter Six will make clear that Dowsing read and annotated the public sermons as one of the private faithful who did not need a conversion. The kinship between Dowsing's thinking and the preachers' points was a close one.

In addition to the examination of these texts as direct evidence of Dowsing's rationale, the thesis approaches Dowsing indirectly through the rich body of literature on Reformed iconoclasm. Placing Dowsing within the social and theological developments in seventeenth century England will allow for a better understanding of how the iconoclast interpreted the sermons. To construct contextually the theological developments which led to Dowsing's campaign, this project engages a range of interests. The research context includes literature on Dowsing but also incorporates material on puritan iconoclasm as an application of Reformed

⁴⁰ See also Robin Jeffs, *Fast Sermons to Parliament: 1640/41-1650/53* (London: Cornmarket Press, 1970). Jeffs' is a facsimile edition of the published sermons. On how these sermons may have affected legislation see George Yule, *Puritans in Politic: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament, 1640-1647* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981). Also two unpublished PhD theses are instructive: Alana Renae Cain, "'Reformation and Desolation': The Career of Stephen Marshall (1594-1655)" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1999), Alexander Nijinsky, "Preachers and Parliamentarians, 1640-1643" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1983).

⁴¹ James C. Spalding, "Sermons before Parliament (1640-1649) as a Public Puritan Diary," *Church History* 36, no. 1 (1967), p. 24.

theology.⁴² In order to understand better the way in which Dowsing read and annotated books and sermons, the thesis also engages research on reading habits in the seventeenth century.

A central question addressed in this thesis is how iconoclastic arguments forged in John Calvin's generation helped to shape the rationale for William Dowsing's iconoclasm. The process of answering that question requires an appreciation for the decades of social and theological transformation that transpired between Calvin and Dowsing. To examine the transformation, Chapter Three identifies figures that made key contributions to the iconoclastic rationale. It also traces historical developments in seventeenth century England which added fuel to iconoclastic fire among puritans. Setting the historical context of Dowsing's iconoclasm between 1643-44 involves inspecting his campaign through the lens of previous research like John Phillips' classic examination of English iconoclasm 'from Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s to the Restoration of Charles II in 1660'.⁴³ Phillips suggested that puritan iconoclasm was part of an effort to sever allegiance to 'king and church' in favor of a 'loyalty to God and the nation'.⁴⁴ Phillips' findings support an important claim in this thesis: William Dowsing's rationale for iconoclasm rested largely on his loyalty to both 'God and the nation'. Margaret Aston's research went well beyond Phillips' work to give a clearer picture of the political and social circumstances surrounding puritan iconoclasm.⁴⁵ Aston argued that the English iconoclasts wanted to destroy 'not only the idols defiling God's churches, but also the

⁴² The label 'puritan' is problematic. Recently scholars have made strides in defining puritanism, most notably *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul Chang-Ha Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Chapter Two (2.I) of the present study explores the complexities of this term.

⁴³ John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1973).

⁴⁴ Phillips, *The Reformation of Images*, pp. 186-187.

⁴⁵ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*. Aston offers a similar analysis of puritan iconoclasm in "Puritans and Iconoclasm, 1560-1660," *The Culture of English Puritanism*, ed. Durston and Eales. For additional background studies on iconoclastic thought see Margaret Aston, *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion, 1350-1600* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*, History Series; 22 (London: Hambledon Press, 1984).

idols infecting people's thoughts'.⁴⁶ Aston also placed Dowsing's iconoclasm in its historical context by asserting that iconoclasts like Dowsing were heirs 'in a direct line of descent that reached back to the first rumbles of Reformation in England, and – by adoptive if not direct parentage – before that to pre-Reformation Lollards'.⁴⁷ Keith Thomas used a method similar to Aston's to analyze the nature of the 'two great waves of iconoclasm': the iconoclasm that occurred under Edward VI in the mid-sixteenth century and that which took place under the auspices of the Long Parliament in the 1640s.⁴⁸ Thomas concluded that seventeenth century iconoclasm is best understood within the framework of puritan biblicism.⁴⁹ The present investigation mostly affirms Aston's and Thomas' historical analysis and portrays Dowsing's iconoclasm as part of the Reformed tradition they identify. Aston's primary goal was not to construct iconoclastic thought, although she explores its theological underpinnings. Rather, she emphasized iconoclasm's effect on English society.⁵⁰ Thomas' research is another example of scholarship that treats iconoclasm 'from above' by observing similar trends in iconoclastic movements rather than emphasizing what puritans hoped to gain through iconoclasm in the 1640s. The current study is more concerned with the way some puritans justified iconoclasm as a necessary application of Reformed theology in its mid-seventeenth century context.

Julie Spraggon, whose research focuses specifically on iconoclasm in the 1640s, highlights a theme of great importance for this study on Dowsing: iconoclasm as the 'Puritan

⁴⁶ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p.2.

⁴⁷ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p.93.

⁴⁸ Keith Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm in Early Modern England," *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006). The essay originally began as the Annual Lecture to the Society of Renaissance Studies in January, 1983. It appears again in April of 2003 in the Medicott Lecture to the Historical Association.

⁴⁹ Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm," p. 26.

⁵⁰ Aston certainly examines both, but emphasizes the implications of iconoclasm. Aston writes, 'The destruction of objects dear to the worshippers and communities that possessed them made a deep and lasting impact both upon witnesses who saw these events and upon those who were born into a period increasing in consciousness of loss ... What was novel, and left an impression whose effects are still with us, was the attempt to make of destruction a systematic process of elimination, to alter minds as well as change the face of buildings'. See *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 2.

theology-in-action of a godly and reforming army'.⁵¹ Whereas Aston studied iconoclasm from pre-Reformation Lollardy through the 1640s, Spraggon limited her investigation to civil war iconoclasm, both official and unofficial.⁵² According to Spraggon, puritan iconoclasm of the 1640s is open to two other interpretations. The most widespread construal treats the systematic cleansing of churches as mindless vandalism. Another common analytical strain explains that iconoclasts destroyed images that, for them, symbolized the enemy during the civil war between Charles I and Parliament (i.e., images represented Laud and the king). This thesis acknowledges these two interpretations, but will focus primarily on Dowsing's iconoclasm as 'theology-in-action'. Dowsing served in the 'godly and reforming' Eastern Association army, a group known for a strong puritan ideology. Dowsing's personal associations in Suffolk also helped to solidify his theological understanding and commitment to the puritan cause. Chapter Two explains how his relationships in Suffolk and his military involvement led to his role as an iconoclast.⁵³ Spraggon's research and the present study on Dowsing have complementary objectives. For example, Spraggon used primary sources such as parish records and cathedral archives to 'get a picture of [iconoclasm's] real extent and significance'.⁵⁴ The current examination relies more on documents owned by Dowsing, judging that these documents shed greater light on the rationale

⁵¹ Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm in the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p. 201. Nicholas McDowell affirmed Spraggon's analysis of the period in his review in 2004. See www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/mcdowell.html (accessed on 9 May 2007).

⁵² Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm in the English Civil War*, p. xii.

⁵³ Dowsing's position in the army would have placed him among pro-parliament and pro-puritan influences. See Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), I. J. Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), Mark A. Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Anne Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains, 1642-1651*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History; 59 (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 1990), Michael Yardley and Dennis Sewell, *A New Model Army* (London: W.H. Allen, 1989).

⁵⁴ Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm in the English Civil War*, p. xv.

that guided puritan iconoclasm.⁵⁵ In short, this thesis considers William Dowsing as a case study within the broader movement that Spraggon analyzed.

Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign was an outgrowth of a religious culture in England that had evolved in dramatic ways since the reign of Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. However, Patrick Collinson's contribution to the study of iconoclasm overstated the speed at which England moved from a visual religion to a religion of 'the Book'.⁵⁶ He asserted that puritan iconophobia was part of an abrupt Reformation/post-Reformation shift from pictures to print. Collinson worded his argument strongly: 'some time between the middle of the reign of Elizabeth and the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640 the English became the people of the book, and that book was the Bible'.⁵⁷ Tessa Watt challenged Collinson's account of the absence of religious imagery in early modern England. Watt argued that Collinson's description of the widespread 'visual anorexia' in England overplayed the change from visual to literate religion during this period.⁵⁸ The current study agrees with Watt and affirms her nuanced description of the changes in the religious landscape during the seventeenth century. Watt's efforts to establish the prevalence of religious images in the 1640s are important to setting the cultural context of

⁵⁵ Spraggon also identified publications that were pivotal in the puritan iconoclastic movement. She highlighted 1641 as a pivotal year with the publication of Edmund Gurnay's *An Appendix unto the Homily against Images in Churches*, George Salteren's *A Treatise against Images and pictures in churches*, and a new edition of Peter Smart's sermon *The Vanities and Downfall of Superstitious Popish Ceremonies* based on Psalm 31:7. Although there is no evidence that Dowsing owned these works, they show a growing concern among the 'godly' over the presence of religious images in the early 1640s. Again, Spraggon is concerned with the effect these texts had on the movement at large, not on Dowsing as an individual.

⁵⁶ Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries; the Third Anstey Memorial Lectures in the University of Kent at Canterbury, 12-15 May 1986* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), Patrick Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation* ([Reading]: University of Reading, 1986).

⁵⁷ Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation*, p. 8.

⁵⁸ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). To construct Dowsing's theological worldview the current project also interacts with other research by Collinson: *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983) and *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). See also *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, ed. Anthony J. Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). On literacy and religion see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

Dowsing's iconoclasm.⁵⁹ The current project also benefits from Watt's treatment of 'chronology of iconoclasm' and 'the extent of its effect on ordinary English men and women'.⁶⁰

For puritans like Dowsing, images in worship symbolized the abuses of Rome and medieval superstition. William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 to 1645, established ecclesiastical policies in the 1630s that advanced a more 'visual' religion and a rigidly hierarchical system of church government. These developments led many puritan preachers and parliamentarians to accuse Laud of re-introducing popery into English Christianity.⁶¹ Some recent scholarship has tried to downplay Laud's role in these supposed innovations.⁶² However, Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke argued that Laud was 'centrally involved' with their design and implementation.⁶³ Tyacke also asserted that Laud's influence further polarized religious sentiments in the 1630s, a polarization that would help to usher in civil war in 1642.⁶⁴ Tyacke's research demonstrated the intensity of the divide between puritans and Laudians on worship issues in the 1630s and 1640s. For Laudians, images were encouraged and woven into

⁵⁹ Additional historical surveys of iconoclasm in England are found in David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Jeremy Dimmick, James Simpson, and Nicolette Zeeman, *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, C.1400-C.1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992). Cressy's chapter "The Battle of the Altars" shows how the Laudian (mis)use of excommunication heightened the conflict over worship in the 1630s. Cressy also showed how a Laudian innovation, the 'restored altar', affected parishioners. See Kenneth Fincham, "The Restoration of Altars in the 1630s," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 4 (2001), p. 920, n. 3. Dimmick (et al.) elucidates medieval perceptions of idolatry which aids in setting the historical background for iconoclasm in England. Duffy described how the Reformation dismantled the traditional medieval liturgy. This material is helpful in understanding the historical shift from Catholic to Protestant worship. Aston's review of Duffy's work summarized its aims as a description of 'the stripping and the stripped, not the strippers'. See *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 430 (Feb., 1994), pp. 111-114.

⁶⁰ Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, pp. 134ff.

⁶¹ Trevor Cooper writes, '[Laudianism included] a renewed emphasis on church fittings, including altars railed at the east end of churches and raised on platforms; and a greater emphasis on the efficacy of the sacraments than of preaching as a means of grace'. *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 421.

⁶² For example, Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism, 1625-1641* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 205-250. Davies argued that Laud reluctantly imposed the ecclesiastical agenda of Charles I.

⁶³ Fincham, "The Restoration of Altars in the 1630s," p. 919. See also Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

⁶⁴ Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism C.1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

the fabric of religious life. Many puritans argued that the divide between puritan and Laudian views on religious imagery could not be bridged. Dowsing's justification for iconoclasm will become clearer in Chapter Three when it is placed within the historical and ecclesiastical context Tyacke described.⁶⁵

Dowsing's iconoclasm in the 1640s was part of a larger reaction to the Laudianism of the 1630s. John Spurr summarised Laud's place in the decade preceding Dowsing's campaign: 'Laud and his colleagues were a clerical avant-garde, deeply concerned for reverence, order and obedience in the church and genuinely fearful of the populism of the zealous Protestantism which they labeled as "Puritanism"'.⁶⁶ The term 'Laudianism' eventually came to denote Laud's two-fold agenda: opposition to Calvinist doctrine (especially unconditional election/reprobation) and opposition to the regulative ideal of the Reformation that succeeded in 'de-beautifying' the Church of England.⁶⁷ Laud was not a Catholic, but he embraced a Catholic rationale for incorporating images in worship. From this vantage point, he felt free to encourage 'the use of painting, sculpture and architecture for their ability to bring men to understand ideas which were religious in character'.⁶⁸ In the 1630s, Laud began to be associated mainly with the

⁶⁵ See also Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573-1645* (London: Macmillan, 1940). Other works that will help to construct theological developments in Dowsing's generation are Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, ed. Kenneth Fincham, Peter Lake, and Nicholas Tyacke (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, v.1, 5, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Woodbridge: Boydell Press [for] the Church of England Record Society, 1994). See also, John Morrill, "The Religious Context of the English Civil War," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 34 (1984).

⁶⁶ Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 86.

⁶⁷ Laud had long been suspected by reform-minded Christians of having an unhealthy affection for Catholic ceremonialism. Perhaps this trait grew during his education at Oxford. It is noteworthy that three of the students with whom Laud associated closely during his time at St. Johns College (Leander Jones, John Roberts, and Augustine Baker) later became Benedictine monks. Laud's BD thesis also contained seeds of anti-Calvinist sentiment. The chief criticism of his thesis was that it attempted to 'sow division between the Church of England and foreign (non-episcopal) Reformed churches'. This criticism was made by Thomas Holland, who also said that Laud had taken most of his arguments from Bellarmine, a Catholic writer. See Anthony Milton, "Laud, William (1573-1645)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16112> (accessed 10 December 2008).

⁶⁸ Phillips, *The Reformation of Images*, p. 170.

centralization of devotional images, crucifixes and popish inscriptions in the churches and chapels of England. He was also linked with the transformation of communion tables into ‘altars’, which were railed and set against the east wall for ‘veneration’. Fincham and Tyacke correctly describe the Laudian scene:

The creation of altars was central to [Laud’s] change in the setting and performance of worship. In parish churches as well as cathedrals and college chapels, altars were richly adorned and placed on newly built steps ... images and stained glass erected, prayer rubrics reinterpreted, and bowing toward the east end encouraged, admittedly with significant variations between both dioceses and parishes.⁶⁹

These were the ‘monuments of superstition or idolatry’, newly introduced, which triggered the parliamentary ordinance of 28 August 1643 – the ordinance that set William Dowsing in motion.⁷⁰

In essence, Fincham and Tyacke’s research portrays Laud as a leader of a type of ‘reform’ in the Church of England. Laud sought to overthrow the Calvinist stronghold in England by ejecting Calvinist (Reformed) ministers in the 1630s and by instituting a wholesale ‘re-edification’ of churches that would drape them in the ‘beauty of holiness’. Although Laud certainly championed the cause of church beautification, his policies did not emerge spontaneously during his tenure as Archbishop in the 1630s. What came to be known as Laudianism was actually an intensification of beliefs held since the reaction following the onset of the Edwardian Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Margaret Aston’s examination of iconoclasm demonstrated that, historically, there had not been a ‘uniform Reformed’ response to images in worship. Aston made an important distinction between iconomachs and iconoclasts in the history of the church. Iconomachs were preachers, prelates, or theologians who were simply hostile to religious images. Iconoclasts were

⁶⁹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 227.

⁷⁰ The Earl of Manchester commissioned Dowsing based on this ordinance. The commission receives attention in Chapters Two and Four of this thesis.

those who went so far as to destroy any 'idolatrous' image they could reasonably target. For example, Ulrich Zwingli was arguably an iconomach, in that he was able to 'cleanse' the churches of Zurich without widespread destruction. In a sense, iconoclasts called for the 'execution' of idols where iconomachs may have been satisfied with their removal. Iconoclasts were simply taking the teaching of iconomachs to what they perceived as a necessary end. There was a close relationship between what Aston called the theology of the 'raving iconomachs' and the actions of 'iconoclasts' in the seventeenth century.⁷¹

Yet two very different streams of research conducted by Peter Lake and William Dyrness expose the possibility that Dowsing's iconoclasm emerged less from 'raving' than from 'reasoning'. In a sense, English puritans sought to cleanse churches of what they believed to be unhealthy images that enslaved people to 'unthinking traditionalism'. Peter Lake has argued that the English Protestant view of popery 'not only associated it with a ritual-based vision of ignorance, superstition and unthinking traditionalism but it also appropriated for Protestantism an essentially word-based vision of rationality, enlightenment and knowledge'.⁷² If that was the self-image among puritans, then Dowsing's rationale for iconoclasm needs reassessment. Modern interpreters have tended to see Dowsing as the Philistine who cudgelled for the sake of destruction. The irony is that Dowsing's blunt iconoclasm was arguably a semi-self-conscious act of enlightenment against a system that he held to be backward and primitive.⁷³ Lake's description of the puritan self-consciousness allows for this alternate reading of Dowsing's iconoclasm. William Dyrness took up the question of religious imagery and identified a

⁷¹ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 18.

⁷² Lake, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice," *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, ed. Cust and Hughes, p. 77.

⁷³ Here the term 'enlightenment' does not indicate the philosophical movement that gained momentum later in the seventeenth century.

‘pedagogy of iconoclasm’ in the Reformed tradition.⁷⁴ Dyrness maintained that in the place of physical images there emerged in Reformed theology a verbally and mentally structured way of processing doctrine. An example of this is Calvin’s *Institutes* which, by the 1585 printing, contained complex summaries of the flow of the argument so that readers could easily perceive the structure. So, in addition to Calvin’s polemic against the dangers of ‘eye-based’ worship, there was an introduction of a better way: grasping the structure of truth in the written word where propositions were put in their proper mental ‘space’.⁷⁵

Over time, ‘Calvinists’ mobilized their theology via Ramist method, resulting in a more rigid conceptual framework. William Perkins disseminated this increasingly inflexible, but reasoned, version of Calvinist theology.⁷⁶ A generation after Perkins, William Dowsing operated within a framework similar to Perkins’ that portrayed iconoclasm as a clear moral obligation. Lori Anne Ferrell has also assessed Perkins’s thought and supported the notion that he was central in establishing Calvinism in England.⁷⁷ She further asserted that Perkins’s ‘ocular catechisms’ clarified Calvinist theology for lay people. Chapter Three of this thesis draws on Dyrness’ and Ferrell’s appraisal of Perkins and asserts that the puritans of the 1640s (including Dowsing) were his theological heirs.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ William A. Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 91.

⁷⁵ Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, pp. 127-131. Randall Zachman has recently argued that what Calvin opposed were ‘dead’ images. He condoned ‘living’ images such as the sacraments – the God-ordained images which can be understood properly when accompanied by the preached word. According to Zachman, Calvin perceived an important relationship between word and image. See Randall Zachman, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

⁷⁶ Chapter Three explores this development within Reformed Theology.

⁷⁷ Lorie Anne Ferrell, “Transfiguring Theology: William Perkins and Calvinist Aesthetics,” Christopher Highley and John N. King, *John Foxe and His World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 160-179.

⁷⁸ Other works related to the present research context include Carlos Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe, Christianity and Society in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1993). See also, Susan Hardman Moore, “For the Mind’s Eye Only: Puritans, Images, and ‘the Golden Mines of Scripture’,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 59, no. 3 (2006), pp. 281-296. This project will also address the modern debate concerning the degree of Calvin’s similarity

Research into seventeenth-century reading habits will aid understanding of Dowsing as a reader of sermons and books. The subject of Dowsing's own reading habits connects this project to the relatively recent development of reception studies. While not an exercise in reception theory *per se*, this thesis heeds the warning from this field of research that inherent difficulties arise when attempting to measuring a text's 'influence' on a reader.⁷⁹ Rather than measuring influence, the present project illuminates the themes in Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons that constitute the corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm in the 1640s. Since Dowsing's campaign corresponded so closely to ideals set forth in the sermons, the argument is that the sermons provide a framework of Dowsing's thought as he set out to cleanse the churches and chapels of East Anglia. Dowsing's reception of the ideals outlined in the sermons is complex and involves his relationship to his surroundings as much as his books. However, his books and annotations offer the opportunity to read alongside the iconoclast as he became immersed in arguments for Reformation and iconoclasm.

Tessa Watt has analyzed the extent of literacy in people of Dowsing's generation in Suffolk. Watt demonstrated that when Dowsing's campaign began, much of Suffolk still practiced a very 'visual' religion.⁸⁰ However, she also indicated that by the year 1600, sixty-one percent of East Anglian yeoman were highly literate. Thus Dowsing, a yeoman farmer, was not unusual in his literacy level.⁸¹ Additionally, Adam Fox established the complexity of the

to English Calvinism. The argument for dissimilarity is found in R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, Studies in Christian History & Thought (London: Paternoster, 1997). An argument that rejects the method of pitting 'Calvin against Calvinists' can be found in Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academics, 2003), pp. 30-31. See also Richard Muller, *After Calvin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 100-102. Muller argues for a more comprehensive treatment of the development of post-Reformation orthodoxy.

⁷⁹ For a seminal study in reception theory see Quentin Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts," *New Literary History* 3, no. 2 (1972).

⁸⁰ Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p.174.

⁸¹ John Morrill adds that Dowsing did not go to university but shows signs of a good education. See "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 4-6.

interaction between oral communication and print. He concluded that ‘the written word ... penetrated to a far deeper level in society and circulated in much greater quantities than was once imagined’.⁸² In the same vein, Stephen Dobranski’s research into reading and authorship in the seventeenth century highlights the growing number of ‘active readers’ in the years leading up to the civil war.⁸³ Relating Dowsing’s reading habits to those of his contemporaries will demonstrate how the iconoclast ‘participated’ in the books and sermons he read. Chapter Five picks up on Paul Seaver’s analysis of the reading and annotations of Dowsing’s contemporary, Nehemiah Wallington.⁸⁴ Wallington’s scriptural reflections are contained in fifty numbered notebooks and reveal an intense piety. Dowsing’s notes are not nearly as copious as Wallington’s, yet both men were convinced puritans who embodied what ‘the godly’ considered to be the ‘biblical’ worldview. Seaver’s research allows for a comparison between these two puritan laymen. Wallington was a man of reflection. Dowsing was a man of action. Reading energized them both.

Alexandra Walsham’s work on “Providence, Print and the Religion of Protestants” showed how printed sermons, drenched in providentialism, became more popular among the ‘godly’ as puritan ministers were banned from their pulpits in the 1630s: they no longer had pulpits so they used the press.⁸⁵ Dowsing purchased the parliamentary sermons in the 1640s like

⁸² Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a similar analysis see I. M. Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸³ Stephen B. Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Brayman Hayckel is less concerned with ways in which readers engaged with books and tracts. However, her treatment of printed marginalia figures in to the discussion in Chapter Five of this study.

⁸⁴ Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (London: Methuen, 1985). See also David Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A Selection* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

⁸⁵ Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 8ff.

other puritan laymen who were accustomed to receiving ‘plain style’ preaching in print.⁸⁶

Chapters Five and Six of this thesis show how Dowsing’s reading material exposed him to puritan providentialism, which Walsham described as a belief in ‘the immutability of the Lord’s eternal and unchanging decree’ and in God’s ‘direct and dynamic government of the terrestrial realm’.⁸⁷ Many of the doctrines Dowsing encountered through print, like the arguments in the parliamentary fast sermons, encouraged a conviction that his iconoclastic campaign was part of a predestined epic known as the Reformation.

In sum, the present study considers direct evidence from Dowsing’s manuscripts and annotated parliamentary sermons and employs a broad range of literature to contextualize his iconoclasm. A central assertion of this thesis is that William Dowsing understood the demands of puritan Reformed theology and possessed a historically contextualized rationale for iconoclasm. The argument is that Dowsing shared in a corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm which consisted of a series of dialectics, each presenting the godly community with an ultimatum. In each case, iconoclasm played a tactical role in overcoming perceived dangers. Dowsing’s reading material, especially his six-volume collection of parliamentary fast sermons, allowed him to engage with the corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm. His annotations in his collection of books and sermons show that he understood the rationale and took it as his own. As the evidence will show, there was a stream in puritan Reformed theology that viewed religious images as threats to spiritual and national security. Therefore, the argument went, destroying images was to defend both Church and Nation. Chapter Three of this project highlights this preservative stream within the Reformed tradition, arguing that Dowsing’s rationale for iconoclasm can be understood as springing from a Reformed desire to protect the

⁸⁶ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, p. 56.

⁸⁷ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, pp. 9-10.

purity of the Gospel and the faith delivered to the saints. As Chapter Six will show, iconoclasm became a moral imperative for many in the Reformed tradition since it was one way to protect England from divine retribution for idolatry.

Part One

The World of the Iconoclast

Chapter 2

Who was William Dowsing?

Iconoclasts are made, not born. William Dowsing was a product of his time and the culture of his birthplace made a significant contribution to his view of the world. His appropriation of certain Reformed tenets seems obvious by his reputation as an iconoclast. However, a more complete picture of how he came to embrace the rationale for Reformation requires an understanding of Dowsing as a puritan layman living in seventeenth century England. Simply fitting Dowsing into the existing body of research does not fully answer the question of his identity. He, like other obscure figures in the seventeenth century, was not an abstraction. He was a husband, father, farmer and soldier with a worldview forged at the hands of highly concentrated religious forces. This chapter follows an indirect methodology by examining ‘puritan’ qualities that Dowsing exemplified. The chapter also approaches Dowsing indirectly by placing him within seventeenth century Suffolk and by explaining his position in the Eastern Association Army – a position that would lead to his iconoclastic reputation. All of these factors contributed to his reception of the corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm and help to explain how this intriguing figure came to be remembered simply as ‘the iconoclast’.

I. William Dowsing as a ‘Puritan’

Dowsing was largely defined by his puritan identity. He shared what came to be known as puritan views relating to worship and Reformation. He belonged to a puritan community in Suffolk and participated in puritan iconoclasm in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. This portion of the study constructs something of Dowsing’s identity by addressing four commonly held

components of Puritanism that emerged from its theological underpinnings: an intractable posture toward doctrine and practice, biblicism, providentialism and anti-popery.¹ At the outset, describing Dowsing as a puritan is problematic because scholars have failed to reach consensus in defining ‘puritan’ or ‘Puritanism’.² Perhaps one factor that makes defining Puritanism challenging is that modern observers try to define objectively what many puritans defined subjectively. John Spurr has described Puritanism as ‘that which puritans saw in each other’.³ One need not choose between objective and subjective avenues when examining Dowsing. Fleshing out the objective characteristics of ‘Puritanism’ will help to locate Dowsing as an enthusiastic adherent to the ‘puritan’ cause.

The puritan classification was initially cast as an insult in the sixteenth century, just as opponents used ‘Cavalier’ and ‘Roundhead’ to deride royalist and parliamentary forces during the civil wars of the 1640s.⁴ Cavaliers and Roundheads are somewhat easier to define because they stood on opposite sides of a battlefield. The label ‘puritan’ presents greater difficulty because it was used indiscriminately, usually without respect to one’s degree of commitment. The name remained imprecise, even as the movement solidified during the reign of Elizabeth I. John Morrill granted that ‘those who wished to abolish episcopacy or to re-write the Book of Common Prayer may be fairly described as puritans’.⁵ Yet, as Morrill indicated, the term could

¹ Chapter Three will trace the development of iconoclastic thought within Reformed orthodoxy. Chapter Three will also focus more on the scriptural arguments employed by the Reformed to combat the use of ‘popish’ imagery.

² John Coffey and Paul Lim give an intentionally vague working definition of Puritanism: ‘Puritanism is the name we give to a distinctive and particularly intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism which originated within the unique context of the Church of England but spilled out beyond it, branching off into divergent streams, and overflowing into other lands and foreign churches’. See *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. Coffey and Lim, pp.1-2.

³ Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689*, p. 7. Spurr clarifies this somewhat evasive definition: ‘In its circular manner, such a definition stresses the interaction of the spiritual and the social among the puritans; it asserts the mediation of individual spiritual experience through social exchange’, *English Puritanism*, p. 202.

⁴ Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1980), p. 104.

⁵ J. S. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution: Essays* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 202-203.

also apply to those who wanted simply to reform episcopacy or allow clergy to omit certain items from the Prayer Book. The struggle to define the movement suggests something of its nature. Like most movements, it became easier to define in times when greater opposition tested and exposed convictions. Thus, changing circumstances in the English Church created an ebb and flow to the definition. Figures like Dowsing who operated in the ‘puritan revolution’ of the 1640s are not as affected by the definition’s fluidity. Even those who disagree over what constituted the finer points of Puritanism would agree that Dowsing – a zealous iconoclast – fits the mold (and possibly the caricature) of a seventeenth-century puritan layman.

Historically, many puritans refused the name. When Josias Nichols published *The Plea of the Innocent* in 1602 his goal was to show the various ways in which the Church of England slandered those who called for a complete reformation of the church. One ‘slandorous’ tactic was to use the name ‘puritan’ to ridicule their calls for reform.⁶ In 1604 William Covell wrote a scathing critique of *The Plea of the Innocent* in which he marveled at Nichols’ disdain for the term.⁷ His answer to the charge of slander was two fold. First he noted that many of Nichols’ colleagues ‘did glorie to be so called’. Second, he argued that the Church of Rome, not the Church of England, first labeled their faction ‘puritans’. Covell also accused the movement of having confused aims: puritans simultaneously wanted to return the Church of England to the model of the early church and to create new ways of practicing their piety. This kind of debate over the name reveals the complexity of its usage.

⁶ Josias Nichols, *The Plea of the Innocent Wherein Is Auerred, That the Ministers & People Falslie Termed Puritanes, Are Iniuriouslie Slaundered for Enemies or Troublers of the State: Published for the Common Good of the Church and Common Wealth of This Realme of England as a Countermure against All Sycophantising Papists, Statising Priestes, Neutralising Atheistes, and Satanising Scorners of All Godlinesse, Trueth and Honestie* (Middelburg: R. Schilders, 1602).

⁷ William Covell, *A Modest and Reasonable Examination of Some Things in Use in the Church of England Sundrie Times Heretofore Misliked, and Now Lately, in a Booke Called the (Plea of the Innocent) and an Assertion for True and Christian Church Policy, Made for a Full Satisfaction to All Those, That Are of Iudgement, and Not Possessed with a Preiudice against This Present Church Government ...: The Contentes Whereof Are Set Downe in the Page Following* (London: Printed for Clement Knight, 1604), pp. 34-35.

To say that a term is not easily defined does not render it meaningless. Several characteristics of Puritanism are widely accepted despite the lack of a precise definition. Therefore, it is possible to describe Dowsing as a 'puritan' with some degree of precision. The overarching attribute was a zealous commitment to the Reformed faith, which Dowsing's iconoclasm clearly displayed. Fleshing out other components such as biblicism, providentialism and anti-popery will help move this study toward a clearer picture of Dowsing's rationale for iconoclasm. Other components are certainly just as legitimate. The list of puritan attributes could include a demand for a preaching ministry or a strong household devotional life. However, the four elements in view are the most relevant to William Dowsing's iconoclasm.

When Patrick Collinson famously described puritans as 'a hotter sort' of Protestant, he hinted at the intractable posture so common among Dowsing's cohorts.⁸ Collinson's 'hotter sort' appellation refers to the extremes for which puritans like Dowsing came to be known. The phrase can be slightly modified with respect to Dowsing, the iconoclast. If historians remember puritans as the 'hotter sort' of Protestant then Dowsing belongs among the 'hotter sort' of puritan. When Dowsing recorded in his journal on 22 December 1643 that he visited 'Jesus Colledg' to 'brake down of superstitious, of saints, and of angels, 120 at least' he did much to solidify the puritan reputation for extremes.⁹ Collinson's description and Dowsing's demonstration underscore the fact that many puritans advocated an inflexible commitment to extreme positions. For example, when the Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge attempted to convince Dowsing that he was wrong to damage their chapel during his iconoclastic campaign, anyone (and probably the Fellows) could have guessed the outcome. Dowsing

⁸ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Cape 1967; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 27. Collinson is actually quoting from a sixteenth century source: Percival Wiburn, *A Checke or Reproofe of M. Howlet's Untimely Screeching* (1581).

⁹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 169, entry 8.

presented iconoclasm as the only possible response to medieval superstition and Laudian ‘idolatry’, and the chapel was ‘cleansed’.¹⁰

To some degree, the puritan identity congealed through a series of external and internal labels. Puritans’ sturdy convictions meant that less zealous contemporaries could recognize a puritan by his/her strident opposition to certain doctrines or practices. Therefore, by the seventeenth century, clergy and laity who voiced uncompromising calls for a Reformed church in England were quickly branded ‘puritans’. Dowsing undoubtedly fitted these external descriptions of a puritan, as the term was used in the 1640s. He also bore striking similarity to external descriptions of puritans made in the previous century. One of the earliest instances of the term ‘puritan’ being used to denote an oppositional stance came in 1565 from the pen of Thomas Stapleton, a Catholic exile during the reign of Elizabeth who leveled the term as an accusation against his Protestant, anti-Catholic, enemies in England.¹¹ Later in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, the term became a convenient way to identify particularly zealous groups, even if doctrinal differences existed among them. Detractors also called them ‘precisians’, ‘saints’ and ‘scripture men’. For the targets of these labels, the names were not altogether offensive. They simply chose labels for themselves that highlighted what they considered to be their positive agenda. Many within the puritan movement referred to themselves as ‘the godly’, ‘gospellers’ or ‘professors’.¹²

It is equally important to note, as Peter Lake has convincingly argued, that many of the ‘hotter sort’ of Protestants learned the art of adaptation for the sake of expediency or a desire for

¹⁰ See Chapter Four (4.IV) for the encounter between Dowsing and the Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

¹¹ Durston and Eales, “The Puritan Ethos, 1560-1700,” *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, ed. Durston and Eales, p. 2.

¹² Collinson, *Godly People*, p.1. Henceforth, this study will use the terms ‘godly’ and ‘puritan’ interchangeably.

consensus.¹³ When Lake examined the complexities of pursuing ‘moderation’ within a movement known for extremes, he identified Edward Dering, Thomas Cartwright, William Whitaker and Laurence Chaderton as prime examples of puritan divines who worked to round many of the theological corners drawn by extremists.¹⁴ While their sympathies remained with the Reformed faith, not all ‘puritans’ envisioned the same rapid timetable for reform in the Church of England. Many hoped that they could avoid separation from the established church through more measured responses to error. Unfortunately, as time marched closer to the 1640s, hopes for peaceful co-existence between Puritanism and the Laudian-controlled church diminished. In the 1620s and 30s, Charles I gained a reputation for ‘popish’ sympathies that lessened the likelihood of moderate correction and increased the potential for extreme campaigns like Dowsing’s.

While there was certainly a moderate influence within Puritanism, both the external and internal labels suggest that the puritan classification came to be associated with unbending doctrine and practice. This trait sustained attacks from without and enjoyed celebration from within the movement. Predictably, the reactionary attitude among many puritans led to a series of conflicts with church and state. Durston and Eales rightly asserted, ‘For much of its history [Puritanism] was an oppositional agitational movement, frequently in conflict with secular and ecclesiastical authorities or with those many sections of local society which did not share its ideals’.¹⁵ For example, puritan opposition to clerical vestments, or ‘popish rags’, dated back to Edwardian England with the heated debate between Bishop John Hooper and Nicholas Ridley,

¹³ Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Lake’s central argument is that there was a strain of moderate influence among those who were self-consciously ‘puritan’ in their sympathies.

¹⁴ Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church*, pp. 1-15.

¹⁵ Durston and Eales, “The Puritan Ethos, 1560-1700,” *The Culture of English Puritanism*, ed. Durston and Eales, p. 3.

who also encouraged an iconoclastic outcry with his Ash Wednesday Court sermon in 1547.¹⁶ The puritan reputation for controversy grew during the reign of Elizabeth. Between 1563 and 1567 puritan opposition to vestments reached such a fever pitch that Elizabeth ‘met [the challenges] with a jealous defense of her own prerogative’.¹⁷ ‘Popish rags’ were not the only target of puritan invective. A pamphlet war erupted in 1588, led by a puritan writing under the pseudonym Martin Marprelate. Marprelate and his associates wanted ‘to replace bishops with presbyters and rebuild the English church on a Scottish or Genevan model’.¹⁸ In short, Dowsing’s iconoclasm was emblematic of the tradition known for a staunch and often disruptive commitment to an idealized church.

William Laud’s efforts to beautify churches and chapels in the 1630s had a two-fold effect on English puritans like Dowsing. The Archbishop of Canterbury further alienated zealous Protestants who believed religious imagery and ornate altars were the harbingers of popery. The Laudian ‘innovations’ also convinced many of the godly that they were the victims of overt persecution. As the tide began to shift in the early 1640s, the godly seized their opportunity to strike down their persecutors. When Dowsing embarked on his Parliament-sanctioned iconoclastic campaign in December 1643, puritans were emerging from their counter-culture identity and trying to create a Reformed culture in England. Dowsing’s visits to chapels and churches marked a shift in status for the godly. He was no longer part of the loosely organized ‘agitatory movement’ against Laudianism in the 1630s. He was an arm of a new establishment learning to wield its power. Even as part of a new and burgeoning *status quo*, puritans like Dowsing held on to idealized positions.

¹⁶ Collinson, *Godly People*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁷ Norman Jones, “Elizabeth, Edification, and the Latin Prayer Book of 1560,” *Church History* 53, no. 2 (1984), p. 176.

¹⁸ Joseph Black, “The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588-89), Anti- Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 3 (1997), p. 708.

In the very early years of Dowsing's life, puritan-Crown relations seemed poised for improvement as hopeful reformers presented the Millenary Petition to James as a pre-coronation request for religious reform in 1603. Since he was merely seven years old at the time, this would have had little impact on the boy Dowsing. But the dawn of James' reign would have lifted hopes in Dowsing's area of Suffolk. While they were originally enthusiastic about what James I could mean for the Reformation in England, puritans were eventually disillusioned by the king's failure to complete the course they had envisioned for him. Matters worsened in 1623 when the king sent a delegation to Madrid with the order to marry Prince Charles to the Catholic, Maria Anna Infanta of Spain.¹⁹ The 'Spanish Match' was a failure which resulted in Charles returning to England conspicuously unengaged. James' failed policy bolstered concerns among the godly that their king was all too eager to compromise with popery.

Dowsing was somewhat interested in religious controversies during this period. In 1620, some twenty-three years before his iconoclasm began, Dowsing purchased Thomas Dighton's *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie to Kneeling in the Very Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper* (1618). Dowsing's rather repetitive annotations in this book show his awareness of anti-Catholic arguments, and his agreement that popery must come to an end in the English Church.²⁰

Puritan disappointment became even stronger under Charles I as Archbishop Laud began to fit parish churches and college chapels with 'altars' and intricate religious imagery in the 1630s.²¹ By the time the Earl of Manchester commissioned Dowsing to remove 'monuments of

¹⁹ Hill, *The Century of Revolution*, pp. 6-7. See also Thomas Cogswell, "England and the Spanish Match," *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, ed. Cust and Hughes, pp. 107-133.

²⁰ See Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper. Dowsing's copy of Dighton's work is located in Dr. Williams's Library, London (564.C.9). Further discussion on Dighton's book is found in Chapter Five (5.I and 5.III) below.

²¹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 227.

superstition' in 1643, many uncompromising 'precisians' believed they had been forced to compromise with Laud's 'idolatry' for more than a decade. Dowsing was connected to many dyed-in-the-wool puritans during this period. His associate Matthew Newcomen engaged in anti-Laudian pamphleteering in 1641.²² His friendship with Newcomen shows that Dowsing did not shy away from the tradition of puritan agitation even before his campaign commenced in December 1643.

Behind Dowsing's allegiance to the tradition of puritan agitation lay a devotion to a single book, the Bible. The iconoclast repeatedly wrote 'what is not warranted and grounded on God's word is sin' in the margins of his copy of Thomas Dighton's *Certain Reasons*. He concerned himself with the proper use of Scripture as he read books and sermons. Looking to England at large, the vernacular Bible had been a centerpiece of English society from the later days of Henry VIII. In describing the centrality of the Bible for English culture, Christopher Hill wrote that it was 'the foundation of monarchical authority, of England's Protestant independence, the text-book of morality and social subordination'.²³ Hill later acknowledged that for most segments of society the Bible was not a lifeless tool for constructing social institutions. Rather it was the Word of a living God who ordained the social order. Interpretations varied, but there was broad agreement that the Bible was the source of truth. In 1560 the Geneva Bible emerged in England, equipped with extensive notes from a Calvinist perspective.²⁴ The Geneva Bible quickly became the version of choice of Protestantism in England. Bruce Metzger noted,

²² Tom Webster, "Newcomen, Matthew (d. 1669)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19995> (accessed 10 December 2008). Further discussion of Dowsing's relationship to Newcomen follows in this chapter.

²³ Hill, *The English Bible and the Century of Revolution*, p. 4.

²⁴ Durston and Eales, "The Puritan Ethos, 1560-1700," *The Culture of English Puritanism*, ed. Durston and Eales, p. 16.

For about three-quarters of a century the Geneva version was the household Bible of a large section of English-speaking Protestantism. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I alone, seventy editions of it were published. About 150 editions, either of the whole Bible or of the New Testament alone, were printed between 1560 and 1644.²⁵

However, the peculiarity of Puritanism was not that puritans owned Bibles, but that the Bible seemed to own them. A strict adherence to a set interpretation of scripture marked the boundary of their ideological community. In 1640, a conviction regarding Scriptural authority led the puritan preacher Stephen Marshall to implore Parliament to ‘pluck up every plant that God hath not planted’ and to remove ‘every ragge that hath not God’s stampe and name upon it’.²⁶ Dowsing owned this sermon and indicated his approval of this statement with marks in the margins. The body of the sermon confirms that Marshall found God’s ‘plants’ and ‘stampes’ only in the pages of Scripture. This strict biblicism was an indispensable element of Puritanism. Granted, the wider Christian community also had a commitment to Scripture. Yet what set the godly apart was their refusal to appropriate practices that the church had labeled adiaphora, things indifferent.²⁷ Many in the godly community required a positive biblical command for each element of corporate worship. The rest of the English church held that ecclesiastical and civil authorities could approve extra-biblical elements in worship. The general consensus was that if the Bible did not strictly forbid a worship practice, then it was permissible if approved by the church. The more radical puritans had a different perspective. *Adiaphora* was a category born out of ‘carnall reason’ that Dowsing also belittled in his annotations. For puritans like

²⁵ Bruce Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” *Theology Today* (1960), p. 350.

²⁶ Stephen Marshall, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, Now Assembled in Parliament, at their Publike fast, November 17. 1640. Upon 2 Chron. 15. 2. The Lord is with you, while yee bee with him: and if yee seek him, he will be found of you: but if yee forsake him, he will forsake you, by Stephen Marshall, Batchelour in Divinity, minister of Finchingfield in Essex. Published by order of the said House.* This is one of the many sermons by Marshall that Dowsing included in his collection. A full thematic analysis of these sermons will follow in Chapter Six.

²⁷ Durston and Eales, “The Puritan Ethos, 1560-1700,” *The Culture of English Puritanism*, ed. Durston and Eales, p. 17.

Dowsing, anything extra-biblical was simply unbiblical. There were no adiaphora. Nothing was indifferent.

When Dowsing entered Cambridgeshire on his iconoclastic mission in December of 1643, he demonstrated active biblicism. ‘Scripture men’ like Dowsing felt comfortable with brutal demolition because they could identify a clear biblical precedent. Keith Thomas wrote,

[For 17th century iconoclasts] biblical precedent justified violent action against such idolatry. The Israelites had been commanded to destroy all the pictures of the Canaanites and all their molten images; and when the godly protestants attacked rood screens and statues of saints, they did so in conscious emulation of Hezekiah, who had broken the brazen serpent in pieces, and Josiah, who had smashed the images and cut down the groves.²⁸

In the mind of many puritans, iconoclasm was the biblically-sanctioned eradication of God-forbidden images. Dowsing’s zeal for the cause revealed his personal biblicism. Dowsing’s journal records his efforts to apply what he believed to be a biblically sound command to cleanse the churches. On the first page of his journal Dowsing listed Genesis 31:34; Numbers 33:4, 52, 55; Leviticus 26:1,30; Deuteronomy 7:4,25,26; and Deuteronomy 12:2 as justification for his destructive campaign.²⁹ These precise citations disclose a keen awareness of the biblical text. Dowsing was also careful to omit verses that did not apply to iconoclasm in order to cite only the most appropriate ones. In other words, rather than citing Numbers 33:1-55, Dowsing was careful to pick out Numbers 33:4, 52 and 55. To do otherwise would have been an abuse of the sacred text. Although Dowsing’s iconoclastic campaign found legal authority in the Long Parliament’s order ‘For the utter demolishing, removing, and taking away of all monuments of superstition or idolatry’, it appears that he also tried to justify his campaign from the pages of Scripture.³⁰

²⁸ Thomas, “Art and Iconoclasm,” p. 26.

²⁹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 155. Chapter Five of this project closely examines Dowsing’s choice of Scripture texts.

³⁰ Chapter Four (4.II) discusses the parliamentary ordinance and Scripture as two components that made up Dowsing’s ‘marching orders’.

If a firm belief in the primacy of the Bible shaped the puritan worldview, their interpretation of human events also sprang from a conviction that the Creator-God predestined all things. Thus many in the godly community came to be known for a robust providentialism. Alexandra Walsham has demonstrated that belief in God's providential direction of England was not peculiar to the godly. Rather, it was a shared belief among all English Protestants, encouraged by events like the deliverance from the Spanish Armada in 1588 and Guy Fawkes' failure to kill James I in 1605.³¹ However, as contemporaries watched these events unfold they drew different conclusions. As Ian Green noted in a review of Walsham's work, '[providentialism] looked and functioned very differently according to where contemporaries stood'.³² A common belief that God directed world events did not produce uniform interpretations of those events. While much of English Protestantism would have affirmed God's meticulous providence, the godly shared an interpretive scheme that set them at odds with the prevailing opinion.

Thomas Beard's providentialist writings became a standard by which many puritans interpreted current events. In 1597 Beard published a translation of a French work by Jean de Chassanion that recorded episodes of God punishing notorious sinners.³³ The work made bold pronouncements concerning divine motives that lay behind instances of death, illness and calamity. Beard expanded this work with a new edition in 1612. In 1618 Beard published a

³¹ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, pp. 259ff.

³² Ian Green, "Review: *Providence in Early Modern England* by Alexandra Walsham," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 2 (2001), p. 639.

³³ Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of Gods Iudgements: Or, a Collection of Histories out of Sacred, Ecclesiasticall, and Prophane Authours Concerning the Admirable Judgements of God Vpon the Transgressours of His Commandements. Translated out of French and Augmented by More Than Three Hundred Examples* (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1597).

revised edition that summarized the material.³⁴ Beard died in 1632 having published a third edition of his reading of divine providence in the previous year. New versions followed in 1642 and 1648 with the help of Thomas Taylor, with the result being that two generations of puritan laity had a regularly updated resource for identifying God's providential hand. Beard's interpretation entered common parlance among puritans. His material also reveals the intensity among the godly when they contemplated God's providence. Walsham summarized this intensity succinctly: 'Meticulous analysis of minutiae stood at the centre of that all-consuming search for certainty about one's eschatological status which came to characterize second generation Calvinism.'³⁵ Works of speculative interpretation similar to Beard's writings helped to convince puritans like Dowsing that iconoclasm was part of God's providential drama. Administering iconoclasm comforted ardent puritans regarding their own 'eschatological status'.

Many puritans believed God certainly showed providential care for England, but also held that God primarily acted on behalf of the godly. An example comes from Dowsing's pen as he wrote to his associate Matthew Newcomen in 1643. After encouraging Newcomen to use his influence with 'parliament men' to remove popish images in Cambridge, Dowsing wrote:

I only reffere you to that famous story in Ed[ward] 6th['s reign how] the English got the victory against the Scots in Musselborough field the same day [&] hower the reformation was wrought in London and images burnt – A[cts] & M[onuments] edit[ion] last.³⁶

In essence, Dowsing believed that God intervened in this battle with the Scots, not just for England's sake, but because images had been burnt in London on that very day. Dowsing relied on John Foxe's account of events, which likely helped to shape the iconoclast's habits of

³⁴ Thomas Beard, *The Thunderbolt of Gods Wrath against Hard-Hearted and Stiffe-Necked Sinnes, or an Abridgement of the Theater of Gods Fearefull Iudgements Executed Vpon Notorious Sinners* (London: Printed by W. I[ones] by the Assignement of Adam Islip, for Thomas Pauier, 1618).

³⁵ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, p. 19.

³⁶ See Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 11. A draft of the letter is copied onto a blank page in Dowsing's collection, one page after the conclusion of John Arrowsmith's *Covenant-avenging Sword Brandished* (VI.2). See Appendix Two.

thought. Later in the letter, Dowsing brings the issue to a finer point. In essence, he argued that Edward's army secured military success through religious obedience ('burning of idolatrous images'). Parliamentary forces could know the same success. As Dowsing concluded, 'Such a dependence hath our increase upon our obedience'.³⁷ This was not the only instance in Dowsing's notes that revealed his reliance upon God's providential hand. As Morrill indicates, 'Dowsing's marginalia to his library show a deep providentialism and faith in an immanent God'.³⁸

In addition to a mindset formed by biblicism and a providential worldview, Dowsing's iconoclasm drew on two very deep roots, both well-fed in Suffolk soil: a love for the Reformation and a hatred of popery. Even beyond Suffolk puritans were widely known for an often vicious opposition to all things 'papist'. Peter Lake explored the ways puritans used anti-Catholic rhetoric to rally popular opinion for the cause of Reformation. According to Lake, anti-popery was 'a way of dividing up the world between positive and negative characteristics, a symbolic means of labelling and expelling trends and tendencies which seemed to those doing the labelling, at least, to threaten the integrity of a protestant England'.³⁹ He claimed that every negative assertion about the papists was also a positive affirmation of something Protestant. The division between Protestant and papist widened as more radical Protestants presented a 'series of binary oppositions' between England and Rome, Christ and Anti-Christ.⁴⁰

For many puritans, the images, altars and ornate decorations authorised by William Laud in the 1630s were all too similar to the remnants of medieval Catholicism in England. The

³⁷ Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 11. Dowsing's draft of the letter is transcribed on a blank page in VI.2 of his collection. See Appendix Two for an image of the draft of the letter and a partial transcription.

³⁸ Morrill, "Dowsing, William (bap. 1596, d. 1668)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

³⁹ Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, ed. Cust and Hughes, p. 74.

⁴⁰ Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, ed. Cust and Hughes, p. 74.

similarity only expanded the gulf between Reformed ‘simplicity’ in worship and the Laudian call for ‘the beauty of holiness’. Dowsing’s understanding of the ‘thesis’ of Reformed worship made it easy to identify its ‘antithesis’ in pre-Reformation imagery and more recent Laudian altars in churches and chapels. Dowsing applied a mentality of ‘binary oppositions’ when he entered a church in Bures St. Mary on 23 February 1644. There Dowsing claims to have ‘brake down 600 superstitious pictures, 8 Holy Ghosts, 3 of God the Father and 3 of the Son’.⁴¹ The iconoclast’s actions were indicative of the Reformed belief that the proper way to worship the Trinity was through ‘spiritual’ worship, unaided by visual representations. Artistic renderings of any person of the Trinity in worship stood in diametrical opposition to that belief.

Beard’s controversial writings add further support to Lake’s claim. In addition to Beard’s attempts to demonstrate God’s providential punishment of sinners, he published works meant to label the Catholic Church as Anti-Christ.⁴² In these works, Beard was characteristically bold and self-assured as he drew clear lines that placed The Reformed and The Church of Rome on opposing sides of a battlefield. Beard exerted great effort to cast Catholics as enemies of God and the godly. He provided substantial evidence for Lake’s assertion that the puritan mentality worked largely according to ‘binary oppositions’.

Perhaps unintentionally, Lake risks reducing anti-papist sentiment to a political or rhetorical device. Granted, many puritans were cunning in the political arena. As Christopher Hill claimed, ‘[John] Pym and later leaders of the House of Commons certainly used Fast Sermons to prepare for political action, including notably the trials of the Earl of Stratford, of

⁴¹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 248, entry 120.

⁴² For example see Thomas Beard, *Antichrist the Pope of Rome: Or, the Pope of Rome Is Antichrist Proued in Two Treatises* (London: Printed by Isaac Iaggard for Iohn Bellamie, 1625), Thomas Beard, *A Retractiue from the Romish Religion Contayning Thirteene Forcible Motiues, Disswading from the Communion with the Church of Rome: Wherein Is Demonstratiuely Proued, That the Now Romish Religion (So Farre Forth as It Is Romish) Is Not the True Catholike Religion of Christ, but the Seduction of Antichrist* (London: Printed by William Stansby, 1616).

Archbishop Laud and of the king himself".⁴³ It is also true that many puritans learned to process theology according to Ramist charts, couching their arguments in dialectical terms.⁴⁴ Far from disagreeing with Lake's identification of dialectics within puritan thought, Chapter Six of the present study stresses this quality in parliamentary preaching to construct a series of dialectics in the fast sermons that framed Dowsing's own rationale for iconoclasm. But the pervasiveness of this dialectical methodology does not necessarily undermine the eminent theological and social dangers that anti-papists perceived in the Church of Rome. Puritans were not playing word games. The material in Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons displays carefully worded arguments, diverging from Beard's anecdotal methodology. Some of the fast sermon preachers may have been informed by Beard's anti-papal writings and were probably sympathetic to his call to defeat the papists. But those who preached to Parliament went to greater lengths to support their accusations with verifiable examples.

By the 1640s, it had become routine for puritan preachers to rehearse the historical narrative of papist subversion in England. One example lies in a fast sermon that Dowsing owned, a sermon preached before the House of Commons by Cornelius Burges on 5 November, 1641. The date of the sermon signifies the anniversary of Guy Fawkes' ill-fated attempt to assassinate James I and his family in 1605. In his 'Gunpowder Plot' sermon, Burges refreshed the collective memory by replaying the attacks England suffered from the hands of papists. The title alone is instructive:

*A List of Some of the Popish Traytors in England. That Their Treasons Were Not Occassioned by Our Laws, but From Principles of their own Religion. That their Priests are Bound to Infuse Such Principles into Them. The Courses Taken by Their Priests and Jesuits to Animate Them unto Treasons. An Experimentall Prognostication.*⁴⁵

⁴³ Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, p. 82.

⁴⁴ McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*, p.2.

⁴⁵ In Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons see II.4.21-23.

What followed were not simply rhetorical flourishes, but case-by-case reminders of past offenses. Burges argued that these attacks were not only theological disputes – they were also acts of treason. He started with Arthur Pole’s schemes to unseat Elizabeth. He further reminded parliamentarians that Pope Pius V’s excommunication of Elizabeth had included the call for her subjects to revolt. He cited the papists ‘Watson and Clerk’ who tried to incite nobles against James I before his coronation. As the charges mount, the sermon reads much more like a legal case than a caricature. Dowsing’s associate Matthew Newcomen preached a similar sermon at St. Margaret’s in Westminster on 5 November 1642. Newcomen listed the ‘nine plots of the papists’ which covered ground already trod by Burges, but emphasized the Gunpowder Plot more heavily. Dowsing etched in the margin of Newcomen’s sermon when the Dedham preacher summarised the papist threat: ‘But this is the craft of the adversaries, to procure and enact Laws that may look one way, and strike another, that may seem to be for Majesty, or Honour, or Decency; but are indeed for the ensnaring and supplanting of the Church of God’.⁴⁶

These examples from Burges and Newcomen demonstrate how puritans so often linked anti-papery to national security. As long as a vestige of popery remained, pure worship and England’s security were both deemed at risk. These sermons were among the dozens of fast sermons which Dowsing purchased and read before he set out to remove the ‘monuments of superstition’ from churches in East Anglia. It is reasonable to imagine that the anti-papist arguments helped to settle his convictions.

Thus William Dowsing embodied at least four traits of a ‘puritan’. He had an uncompromised commitment to the Reformed faith. His annotations portray a mind enraptured

⁴⁶ Matthew Newcomen, *The Craft and Cruelty of the Churches Adversaries Discovered in a Sermon Preached at St. Margarets in Westminster, before the Honourable House of Commons Assembled in Parliament, Novemb. 5, 1642 / by Mathew Newcomen* (London: Printed by G.M. for Christopher Meredith, 1643). In Dowsing’s collection see II.5.10.

with biblical texts. His belief that God would intervene on behalf of parliamentary forces, if they committed to removing idolatrous images, shows that he interpreted world events through the lens of providence. He was sympathetic to a larger puritan resistance to the ‘subversive’ plots of the papists. All of these factors underscore the central premise that Dowsing was ‘puritan’ in his attitude toward religious images. That is, these traits culminated in iconoclastic fervour that can only be described as *puritan*.

II. William Dowsing as a Man of Suffolk

The next element to consider is the environment in which these puritan attitudes first took shape in William Dowsing. The late sixteenth and seventeenth century Suffolk into which Dowsing was born was a bastion for godly sentiments. While this fairly describes Suffolk in the year of Dowsing’s birth, this was not how it had always been. ‘The significant fact about East Anglia’ argued Diarmaid MacCulloch,

is that there was a spectacular transformation within forty years of Edward’s [VI] death. As a Jesuit missionary commented in the early 1590s, outside a network of Catholic gentry families, this was now a region of ‘most fierce Protestants’. The new mood in East Anglia did not so much represent the disappearance of white-hot devotion as a radical turn-around in its direction.⁴⁷

Dowsing was born into this relatively new ‘fierce’ Protestantism.

The future iconoclast was born in Laxfield, Suffolk on 2 May 1596 to Wolfran Dowsing and Joan (Cooke) Dowsing.⁴⁸ Although it appears he did not go to university, his knowledge of Latin and Greek suggests that he had a good early education. By his early twenties, William began to purchase and read serious books. The entire library is not extant, but historians can

⁴⁷ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), p. 115.

⁴⁸ Morrill’s essay in Cooper’s volume summarises much of Dowsing’s early life. See “William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper.

partially construct his possessions based on cross-references in the margins of available books.

John Morrill gives a rough sketch of Dowsing's collection:

He had a number of biblical commentaries, an eclectic collection of works of religious controversy from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (including works by Tyndale, Bullinger, Bale, and the exiled John Robinson and Thomas Dighton), no less than three separate editions of Foxe's Acts and Monuments, and an almost complete set of the fast sermons preached to the Long Parliament between 1640 and 1646 (but significantly, perhaps, not thereafter). He also possessed a collection of works by Roman historians (Plutarch, Livy, Josephus) and modern historians (Bacon, Hayward, and Raleigh). The last books he is known to have bought—almost twenty years before his death—related to the debate on the regicide, together with an edition of Polybius purchased in 1651.⁴⁹

The books show an affinity for Calvinist doctrine – as do Dowsing's annotations within them.

As will become evident in later chapters when his collection is explored in depth, Dowsing's books contained core themes that helped to shape this particular iconoclast's passion for the cause of Reformation.

Reformed doctrine had long been a significant element of Suffolk culture. This was due in large part to the high concentration of puritan gentry throughout the region. It is therefore likely that Dowsing's allegiance to the Reformed faith would have endeared him to many prominent Calvinist families in Suffolk. J.T. Cliffe has argued that Puritanism took hold in Suffolk in the sixteenth century, largely from the influence of the Bacon family. The Barnardistons, rather than the Bacons, were the oldest family in Suffolk and had more pristine Calvinist ties since the patriarch, Sir Thomas Barnardiston, studied under John Calvin in Geneva. But the Bacons had a similar link to the Calvinist elite. Edward Bacon (1548-1618) of Shrubland Hall 'studied under Johann Sturm at Strasbourg and Lambert Danaeus at Geneva,

⁴⁹ Morrill, "Dowsing, William (bap. 1596, d. 1668)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Chapter Five of this study will analyze Dowsing's library. Chapter Six analyses the fast sermons thematically.

while lodging in Theodore Beza's house'.⁵⁰ It seems that the Bacons carried broad influence after establishing themselves in Redgrave, Suffolk in the sixteenth century. Cliffe argued that the Bacon family (along with prominent families such as the Wrays and the Yelvertons), 'owed both their wealth and their religious loyalties to Elizabethan forbears who had been successful lawyers'.⁵¹ Sir Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave (senior) was Elizabeth I's Lord Keeper and had a keen interest in education. Robert Johnson, Bacon's nonconformist chaplain, founded free schools in Oakham and Uppingham which were led by a series of puritan headmasters. Nicholas also founded or remodelled schools in Bury St Edmunds and St Albans and wrote the governing documents for each.⁵² Thus, the Bacons helped to establish a tradition of schooling Suffolk youth in Calvinist doctrine, which may have had an impact on the quality of education William Dowsing received.⁵³

Nicolas Bacon's influence was not limited to the field of education. Although he maintained a public persona that could remain in step with Elizabeth's via media, Nicolas worked tirelessly to establish a godly community in Suffolk. Beside schools, another way Nicolas accomplished this was through the promotion of godly politicians. There were many 'puritan magistrates in East Anglia whom the lord keeper advanced in the local politics of the region'.⁵⁴ In 1611, Sir Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave (junior) was the first man to purchase a baronetcy. This position only increased the Bacons' standing in the Suffolk community and

⁵⁰ A. Hassell Smith, "Bacon, Sir Nathaniel (1546?–1622)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2005, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/998> (accessed 30 October 2007).

⁵¹ J. T. Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry: The Great Puritan Families of Early Stuart England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 108.

⁵² Robert Tittler, "Bacon, Sir Nicholas (1510–1579)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1002> (accessed 30 October 2007).

⁵³ Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry*, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Collinson, *Godly People*, p. 146.

helped to establish Sir Nicholas as ‘one of the leading patrons of Suffolk Puritanism’.⁵⁵ Clive Holmes recorded the thoughts of a Suffolk contemporary who said Sir Nicholas was ‘the greatest friend to pious ministers in all these parts’ and that his house was ‘famous for religion and hospitality’.⁵⁶ In essence, Suffolk was a place of influential gentry who had a special interest in the advancement of the Reformed faith. It was a land of relative safety for the godly to flourish. Evidence for the pervasiveness of Puritanism in Suffolk led Patrick Collinson to write, ‘In Elizabethan and Jacobean Suffolk there may have been a closer approximation to the type of a godly commonwealth than in any part of England at any time’.⁵⁷ This was the cultural climate in which William Dowsing’s Reformed sympathies took shape.

Puritan patronage in Suffolk appears especially overt when compared to counties like Warwickshire, which Anne Hughes described as having a ‘rather conformist public face’ in the seventeenth century.⁵⁸ In other words, Warwickshire did not share the same kind of public dissatisfaction with the established church. Hughes suggested that there may have been a wide puritan consensus among Warwickshire gentry, based on diaries, wills and other personal documents.⁵⁹ However, Suffolk Puritanism maintained a bolder public presence than in Warwickshire during the seventeenth century. Dowsing’s association with firebrands like Matthew Newcomen and his eventual participation in iconoclasm throughout Cambridgeshire and Suffolk portray Dowsing as an enthusiastic supporter of this bold public dissatisfaction with the established church. He was a model man of Suffolk.

⁵⁵ Cliffe, *Puritan Gentry*, p. 130.

⁵⁶ Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, p. 124.

⁵⁷ Collinson, *Godly People*, p. 448. In an article on the Stour Valley, Francis Bremer showed that this is a common understanding of Suffolk during this period. Bremer cites Collinson along with Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County, 1500-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). See Francis J. Bremer, ‘The Heritage of John Winthrop: Religion Along the Stour Valley, 1548-1630,’ *The New England Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (1997), p. 516.

⁵⁸ Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 69.

⁵⁹ Hughes, *Politics, Society, and Civil War in Warwickshire*, pp. 70ff.

Some time in the early 1620s, Dowsing married Thamar Lea, the daughter of a godly Suffolk gentleman. During the early years of their marriage, the Dowsings moved to a farmhouse just outside of Coddendam, Thamar's home village.⁶⁰ The couple established a stable home that produced ten children. Dowsing would have been thirty-seven years old and living in Coddendam when William Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury. As the Laudian movement washed across the landscape, Dowsing attended the Coddendam Church with his wife and children, sitting under the preaching of Matthias Candler and Thomas Waterhouse, both puritans.⁶¹ Candler was 'puritan' to the degree that he received an admonition for nonconformity after the controversial visitation of Matthew Wren in 1636.⁶² Waterhouse's response to the pressures of Wren's regime is clear: he was among the many Suffolk puritans who sought to establish godly ideals across the Atlantic. He joined the New England experiment by 1639 but resettled in Coddendam in 1643, by which time Dowsing had left the village and was about to begin his crusade.⁶³ According to John Blatchly, it is compelling evidence of Dowsing's convictions in the 1630s that he attended the Coddendam church at all; although it should be noted that Coddendam was Dowsing's parish church. The Baylham Church was half the distance from the Dowsing home, but Dowsing chose the longer walk to his parish church for his family. It is likely in any case that the preaching at Baylham was not to his taste. The minister, John Bird, a man removed from the church in 1645 during the height of the civil war cleansing.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Morrill, "Dowsing, William (1596-1668)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁶¹ John Blatchly, "Dowsing's Homes," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 30.

⁶² John Blatchly, "Candler, Matthias (1605-1663)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66265> (accessed 10 December 2008). Since Wren's visitation was so strict, this admonition could have been for something negligible by other standards. Nevertheless, Candler found himself at odds with Laudian officials.

⁶³ Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 182.

⁶⁴ Blatchly, "Dowsing's Homes," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p.30. According to the *Atlas and Index of Parish Registers*, it appears that at the time that Dowsing lived there, Coddendam would have

Thamar died unexpectedly in 1640, leaving Dowsing with the responsibility of managing a large household. By 1641 he moved to Stratford St. Mary in the Stour Valley, a region known for puritan sympathies. There Dowsing associated himself with the parish of Dedham which lay on the Essex side of the River Stour. Dedham had offered assistance to the puritan cause in Suffolk since the time that a group of 'reformers' established a formal godly conference in Dedham in 1582.⁶⁵ This conference helped to settle numerous godly clergy in both Essex and Suffolk. Dowsing's move to the Stour Valley is the likely beginning of his association with Matthew Newcomen, since Newcomen became a Dedham preacher in 1636. Newcomen succeeded John Rogers in the Dedham pulpit and made a name for himself as an accomplished preacher and attentive pastor.⁶⁶ Tom Webster noted that Newcomen's preaching 'drew godly visitors from Colchester and won him invitations to preach along the Stour Valley, receiving accolades from lay and clerical listeners alike'.⁶⁷

Newcomen did not limit himself to quiet pastoral duties. He was convinced of the need to reduce the power of the episcopacy in the Church of England and joined with like-minded puritans to pursue that cause. The most dominant among this group was Stephen Marshall, prolific preacher and active puritan statesman. The tracts this group produced came to be known as 'Smectymnuus' tracts, combining the initials of each contributor (Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen and William Spurstowe). Their first tract, *An*

been his parish church, making it likely that he was 'required' to attend this church. Granted, it is not certain how strictly these boundaries were enforced. This also does not undermine the influence Dowsing received in the Coddensham church. See Cecil R. Humphery-Smith, *The Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers* (Chichester, West Sussex, England: Phillimore, 1995).

⁶⁵ See Collinson, "The Dedham Conference," *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 222ff. See also Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England: The Caroline Puritan Movement, 1620-1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 44-45.

⁶⁶ Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England*, p. 100.

⁶⁷ In addition to Webster's material in *Godly Clergy* see Webster, "Newcomen, Matthew (d. 1669)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Answer to a Booke Entitled, An Humble Remonstrance. In Which, the Original of Liturgy and Episcopacy is Discussed appeared in 1641. It was an answer to James Hall's work *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament*. Upon the publication of the first Smectymnuus tract, Hall replied directly to them with *A Defense of the Humble Remonstrance, against the Frivolous and False Expectations of Smectymnuus* (1641). During the early to mid-1640s, Smectymnuus tracts became more vitriolic against the existence of the episcopacy and Laudian excesses.

Newcomen also had parliamentary ties. In fact, all of the members of Smectymnuus preached at least one fast sermon before the Long Parliament between 1641 and 1646. Dowsing purchased one sermon by Thomas Young and at least two by each remaining member. As was the case with other sermons he bought, Dowsing annotated the texts well. Dowsing marked the words when Edmund Calamy preached, 'It is resolution that will make you valiant for the truth, that will make martyrdom as pleasing as a bed of roses.'⁶⁸ He also noted two of Marshall's doctrines on the title page of the sermon: 'men may be stirred up with admirable spirits to attempt great things for God and yet their work miscarry', and 'though their work come to nothing, yet themselves shall be highly magnified with the Lord'.⁶⁹ Perhaps Dowsing found personal satisfaction in the doctrines as a zealous 'volunteer' iconoclast.

⁶⁸ Edmund Calamy, *The Noble-Mans Patterne of True and Reall Thankfulness Presented in a Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable House of Lords, at Their Late Solemne Day of Thanksgiving, June 15, 1643: For the Discovery of a Dangerous, Desperate and Bloody Designe Tending to the Utter Subversion of the Parliament and of the Famous City of London / by Edmund Calamy* (London: Printed by G.M. for Christopher Meredith, 1643), p. 49. In Dowsing's collection see V.22.49. On p.54 of Calamy's message Dowsing apparently wanted to show his support for several of the preacher's references by adding an additional flurry of Scripture verses in the margin. As though each were an 'amen' the iconoclast wrote: '1 Sam. 17-50.51; Est.7-9.10; Gen.45.5.7.8; Jonah.1.17; Jer.39.6; Math.14.30.31; Exod.2.3-7.9; Ezek.37.1.2-13; Acts.12.3; Jer.39.7-13; Acts.12.7-11'. This particular habit in Dowsing's annotations is addressed in Chapter Five.

⁶⁹ Stephen Marshall, *Reformation and Desolation, or, a Sermon Tending to the Discovery of the Symptomes of a People to Whom God Will by No Meanes Be Reconiled Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at Their Late Solemne Fast, Decemb. 22, 1641 / by Stephen Marshall* (London: Printed for Samuel Gellibrand, 1642). In Dowsing's collection see IV.10.

Newcomen was also appointed to the third sub-committee of the Westminster Assembly, with a charge to examine three articles of the established church. He also assisted in drafting the catechism that would be issued by the assembly.⁷⁰ In short, Newcomen was well-connected and seen as an influential champion of the godly cause. Both Newcomen and Dowsing signed a petition for reform delivered to the House of Commons on 20 January 1642, the two names close together.⁷¹ It is not surprising then that in 1643 Dowsing asked his Dedham connection to use his influence with ‘parliament men’ to carry out the Reformation in Cambridge. Dowsing wrote to Newcomen,

Sir, I would m[en]cion you with one thing, if you have any interest in parliament men, now we have an army at Cambridge it might be a fit tyme to write to the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge & Mayor to pull down all their blasphemous crucifixes, all superstitious pictures and reliques of popery according to the ordinances o’ parliament.⁷²

Apparently, Newcomen provided Dowsing with access to events beyond Suffolk. However, Dowsing certainly brought something to the relationship. He was eager to put into practice the preaching of Newcomen and his associates. In essence, the letter to Newcomen could be seen as an application for the position of ‘iconoclast’.

Dowsing owned a total of three sermons that Newcomen preached to the Long Parliament. Newcomen’s messages show that both the preacher and the iconoclast shared a commitment to removing popery from England. Just as Dowsing wanted to target ‘blasphemous

⁷⁰ Webster, “Newcomen, Matthew (d. 1669),” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁷¹ Morrill, “William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 4. According to the Journal of the House of Commons, it was a ‘Mr. Bacon’ who ‘in the Name of the rest, did declare, being the Substance of the Particulars of their Petition’. The House ‘did give them Thanks for the Expressions of their Desires to serve the King and Parliament; and of their Care of the Church and Commonwealth: And that this House will continue their Care for them in the best Manner they can, see House of Commons Journal Volume 2: 20 January 1642, *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 2: 1640-1643* (1802), pp. 387-390. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=3859> (accessed 7 November 2008).

⁷² The original letter is not extant. A draft copy of the letter is copied onto a blank page in Dowsing’s sermon collection following John Arrowsmith’s *Covenant-avenging Sword Brandished* (VI.2). See Morrill, “William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 11.

crucifixes, all superstitious pictures and reliques of popery', Newcomen urged Parliament to '[Cast] out from among us, all appearances of Popery; everything that looks like Rome, everything of which the papists may say, this you borrowed from us'.⁷³ When Dowsing read along with his eloquent associate, he might have echoed Newcomen's vision for a completed Reformation:

That the Church of Christ may enjoy all those liberties and ordinances purchased for her by the blood, and bequeathed to her in the testament of her Lord Jesus: that all her ways may be ordered according to the rule of Gods word; that the Gospell may runne and be glorified; that those two great illuminating ordinances of Preaching and Catechizing ... may have such liberty, encouragement and maintenance, that all the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.⁷⁴

Matthew Newcomen was not the only prominent man with whom Dowsing associated. Jacob Caley was important to local politics in Suffolk. In 1642 the council of Ipswich elected Caley one of its twenty-four common councilmen. His elevation to that position was controversial, but his puritan ties soon won over the Suffolk locals.⁷⁵ After a long day of iconoclasm on 22 August 1644, Dowsing stayed overnight in the Caley household, which indicated some level of familiarity with the councilman.⁷⁶ The point is that Dowsing was well-connected locally on both clerical and political levels. He seemed at ease with local officials who affected Suffolk politics.

⁷³ Newcomen, *The Craft and Cruelty of the Churches Adversaries* (1643). In Dowsing's collection see II.5.46. This was one of the many 'religious means' that Newcomen suggested to Parliament. However, as to 'civil means of rooting out Popery' Newcomen decided to 'wholly leave them to the Councell of the State', II.5.47.

⁷⁴ Matthew Newcomen, *Jerusalems Watch-Men the Lords Remembrancers a Sermon Preached at the Abbie at Westminster before Both Houses of Parliament, and the Assembly of Divines Upon Their Solemn Fast, July 7, 1643 / by Matth. Newcomen* (London: Printed by M. F. for Christopher Meredith, 1643). In Dowsing's collection see VI.14.34.

⁷⁵ John Blatchly, "Jacob Caley: A Dowsing Associate in Ipswich," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 334ff.

⁷⁶ Caley was later accused of corruption related to his duties in collecting money for the relief of Irish Protestants. In the anti-puritan climate of 1662, church officials levelled charges that Caley misappropriated a sum of £3,000. Of course, these politically charged accusations increased dramatically after the Restoration in 1660. The accusations may say more about Caley's commitment to Puritanism than any real corruption.

When Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign carried him into Suffolk, the sheer number of churches on his itinerary required him to appoint deputies to carry out the work. Here again, the chosen men reveal Dowsing's local connections and his godly priorities. John Blatchly has identified otherwise obscure Suffolk men such as Edmund Blomfield of Aspal Stonham, Edmund Mayhew and Thomas Glandfield of Gosbeck, Francis Verdon of Linstead Parva, Francis Jessup of Beccles and the 'virtually illiterate' John Crow as Dowsing's chosen vessels of iconoclasm.⁷⁷ He selected them from among his 'friends and family' and those with equal or lesser social standing. Tracing each individual's contribution is not as important to the present argument as the fact that Dowsing obviously had a considerable local godly network from which to choose his deputies in the campaign. He did not simply surround himself with books and sermons. He led like-minded men in the godly cause.

Dowsing's Puritanism took shape under the protection of staunchly Calvinist gentry in a region of East Anglia that celebrated godly convictions. His convictions echoed those of influential clergy and politicians and he could summon up an enthusiastic group of godly peers. Although Dowsing lived and worked comfortably as a farmer in a reform-minded region of Suffolk, it was his career as a soldier that would promote him to the office of iconoclast.

III. William Dowsing as a Soldier

Dowsing served as provost marshal in the Eastern Association Army during the civil war and helped to supply parliamentary troops during campaigns against royalists in King's Lynn

⁷⁷ John Blatchly, "Dowsing's Deputies in Suffolk," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 72ff.

and Essex.⁷⁸ Dowsing's role as a soldier parallels his commitment to the Reformation. In both cases he embraced authority and obeyed explicit orders without improvisation. Commanding officers recognised his zeal enough to entrust him with a crucial but unenviable task. Historians have also acknowledged Dowsing's zeal as he scoured the countryside of East Anglia in a vivid manifestation of the Reformation in England. Dowsing was as committed to a militant reformation as he was to the military.

As a Suffolk farmer with puritan ties, it was only natural that Dowsing sided with Parliament and took a position in the Eastern Association Army. The army of the eastern counties has a rich history. As civil war erupted between Charles I and the Long Parliament, the five eastern counties of Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk banded together in February 1643 as the Eastern Association. This parliamentary force was originally under the command of Lord Grey of Warke who answered to the committee of the Eastern Association stationed in Cambridge. The committee removed Lord Grey after several early defeats by royalist forces. The Earl of Manchester secured command of the Eastern Association Army in August of 1643.⁷⁹ Under Manchester, the association formed a unified front against the king. When Parliament added Lincolnshire and Huntingdonshire to the Association in 1643, an entity emerged that would put down royalist uprisings, conquer Lincolnshire for the parliamentary cause, and help to devastate Prince Rupert at Marston Moor. The strength of the Eastern Association quickly became evident. In fact, by 1645 The Eastern Association Army would constitute the heart of Oliver Cromwell's rising New Model Army.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Morrill, "Dowsing, William (bap. 1596, d. 1668)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁷⁹ Anne Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains, 1642-1651*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History; 59 (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 1990), p. 28.

⁸⁰ Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, p. 1.

It is noteworthy that the chairman of the Cambridge committee during Manchester's tenure was Nathaniel Bacon, who simultaneously served as an elected recorder in Ipswich. His ties in both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk led to conflicts in his schedule. The committee twice wrote to Ipswich requesting that Bacon be allowed to remain in Cambridge to attend his duties there. Holmes indicated that the presence of a Bacon on the committee may have helped morale.⁸¹ Bacon's position in the committee helps to illustrate the widespread puritan ideology in the Eastern Association Army. Other committee members shared a puritan outlook, although they were not altogether uniform in ecclesiology. Bacon represented Suffolk with a strong Presbyterian stance. John Brewster, an Independent, represented Norfolk. Colonel Henry Mildmay from Essex carried a mixed allegiance to Presbyterians and Independents. The remaining members of the committee were less influential and lined up with Bacon, Brewster, or Mildmay.⁸² Uniting them all were two settled convictions: the Reformation must go forward and Laud's innovations must be overturned. Manchester shared this sentiment and had strong puritan credentials. He met regularly with puritan statesmen such as Pym, Hampden and Fiennes. He shared a close association with Oliver Cromwell, although the two had a later disagreement over military tactics. Manchester was also selected as a lay representative in the Westminster Assembly.⁸³ On the military front, his puritan allegiance is evident from his selection of godly officers for the Eastern Association, though he obviously erred on the side of military experience. His preference for godly officers and the dominance of the godly among army

⁸¹ Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, pp. 123-124.

⁸² Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, pp. 124-125. See also J.T. Peacy, "Mildmay, Henry (c.1594–1664/5?)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁸³ See "Appendix 6: The Earl of Manchester," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 345-346.

chaplains explain why Manchester's army was 'thought of as the repository both of good discipline and godliness'.⁸⁴

It was soon after Manchester's appointment in 1643 that he commissioned Dowsing to enforce the iconoclastic ordinance of Parliament. John Morrill considered it probable that Dowsing's letter to Newcomen secured the appointment. Dowsing castigated Newcomen in the letter for loaning Dowsing's book on 'Church Policy' to 'Mr. Grimston' without Dowsing's permission. 'Mr. Grimston' is almost certainly Harbottle Grimston (junior) of Essex. Grimston was a 'Parliament man' who, in 1640, had openly labeled William Laud 'the sty of all pestilent filth, that hath infected the State and Government of the Church and Common-wealth'.⁸⁵ Grimston provided yet another link in the chain between Dowsing and the halls of power. Newcomen may have shown the letter to Grimston, who relayed Dowsing's desire for Reformation to his close associate in Parliament, the Earl of Warwick. Warwick was present to hear Stephen Marshall denounce 'idolatry' in England the funeral sermon for John Pym in December 1643. The enthusiasm that followed Marshall's sermon may have led Warwick to recommend Dowsing to his son-in-law, the Earl of Manchester. Manchester likely felt responsible for implementing the ordinance of 1643 after the parliamentary deadline had passed. It does not strain credulity that Dowsing knew of these connections since at this point Newcomen was near the centre of parliamentary politics.⁸⁶ What is known for certain is that Dowsing wrote the letter in March 1643. Pym's funeral was on 15 December of that year and

⁸⁴ Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, p. 113. See also Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains*, pp. 28-29.

⁸⁵ Christopher W. Brooks, "Grimston, Sir Harbottle, second baronet (1603-1685)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11640> (accessed 9 December 2009).

⁸⁶ Webster, "Newcomen, Matthew (d.1669)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Manchester signed Dowsing's commission four days later. By 20 December Dowsing's mission to rid the churches of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk of 'monuments of superstition' was underway.

Manchester's commission to Dowsing in relation to the 1643 ordinance was unique. Other parliamentary military leaders, such as Robert Devereux (third Earl of Essex) could have issued a similar commission but did not. The method prescribed by the ordinance was to have local churchwardens carry out the 1643 ordinance. The military context of Manchester's commission to Dowsing was indicative of the militant Puritanism in the Eastern Association. The commission itself illuminates the fever pitch of anti-papist sentiment by December of 1643. The parliamentary deadline for the destruction of popish images was in November. Manchester did not let much time elapse before taking matters into his own hands. His commission to Dowsing stated that the images that remained did so 'in manifest contempt of said Ordinance'. After listing the various items under the ban ('Crucifixes, Crosses, & all Images of any one or more p'sons of the Treinity') Manchester made Dowsing's mission clear:

These are therefore to Will & require you forthw'th to make your repaier to the severall Associated Counties and put the s'd Ordinance in execution in every p[ar]ticular hereby requiring all Mayors Sheriffes, Bayliffes Constables headbourghs & all other his Ma[jes]ties Officers & loveinge subjects to be ayding & assisting unto you whereof they may not faile at there perils. Given under my hand & seale this 19th of December 1643.⁸⁷

The commission addressed William Dowsing and 'such as hee shall appoint'. Just ten days later Manchester issued another commission to clarify some of the particulars of the ordinance. For example, he authorised Dowsing to take note of any public official (such as churchwardens, heads of colleges) that would not allow their churches or chapels to be 'cleansed'. This addendum to the first commission was likely occasioned by Dowsing's lengthy disputation with

⁸⁷ See Trevor Cooper, "Dowsing's Commissions from the Earl of Manchester," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 349-350.

the Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge on 26 December.⁸⁸ Manchester made it clear that he intended to back his iconoclast.

Later chapters will make clear that Dowsing's personal justification for iconoclasm came from the pages of Scripture. However, it is important to understand that the military context of his iconoclasm made him much more effective than many of his colleagues. Since only the first entry of the journal (recording his work at Peterhouse, Cambridge) mentions the presence of soldiers, it is not clear how often he actually commanded a military detail on these visits. Nonetheless, he carried out his commission with military precision and the all-important support of the Earl of Manchester.

IV. William Dowsing as an Iconoclast

Dowsing was arguably the most thorough of English iconoclasts, but he was by no means the prototype. The history of iconoclasm in England is extensive, though much of it was unofficial. This chapter now turns to Dowsing's place in the long history of official and unofficial iconoclasm in England. Dowsing's career as a soldier is almost indistinguishable from his career as an iconoclast. The two roles united under the commission from Manchester. It is safe, therefore, to assume that Dowsing viewed his iconoclasm as official, because he believed it had justification in an ordinance of Parliament and a lesser commission from a commanding officer. John Spurr differentiates between the unruly iconoclasm that took place when the godly 'first took up arms against Charles I and Laud' and the iconoclasm 'undertaken in a more orderly

⁸⁸ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 161, entry 2. Chapter Four (4.IV) of this study examines Dowsing's dispute with the Pembroke Fellows.

fashion by Reformers like William Dowsing'.⁸⁹ Dowsing was not among those who took it upon themselves to 'take up swords and cudgels against [idolatry's] representatives in their own neighbourhoods'.⁹⁰ In fact, Dowsing himself seems to have recognized the need for official sponsorship before he could 'cleanse' the churches. Once again, Dowsing's letter to Matthew Newcomen in March 1643 is instructive. In the letter, Dowsing predicated his call for action on the fact that there was at that time 'an army at Cambridge'.⁹¹ The official presence of parliamentary forces made Dowsing feel that the 'fitt tyme' for action had come. As he took up this charge, Dowsing continued a tradition of official and unofficial iconoclasm in England. His campaign was a significant phase in a much larger effort that dated back to the pre-Reformation era. Dowsing joined a long line of English iconoclasts when his campaign began in December of 1643.

In her extensive study of English iconoclasts, Margaret Aston rightly asserted that 'history has produced many iconoclasts, [but] it has not produced many iconoclastic movements'.⁹² Aston showed that iconoclasm was not peculiar to the Reformation, reminding readers that even wars in the twentieth century had elements of statue defaming.⁹³ Indeed recent events in Iraq featured scenes of forces defacing statues of Sadaam Hussein to mark the end of a previous era. Although this act was not of a 'religious' nature, it helps to remind historians that destruction of undesirable images is a human urge not unique to Reformation and post-Reformation iconoclasts. However, the religious nature of Reformation iconoclasm distinguishes it among secular episodes. The Reformers did not tear down statues in order to

⁸⁹ Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 182.

⁹⁰ Alexandra Walsham alludes to this quote from Robin Clifton's "The Popular Fear of Catholics During the English Revolution". See Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 138.

⁹¹ Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 11.

⁹² Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 5.

⁹³ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, pp. 5-6.

erect new ones. They were (re)introducing a paradigm for worship diametrically opposed to the ‘folly’ of medieval Catholic superstition. In their minds they were ushering in pure, spiritual worship. The irony of Reformation iconoclasm was that reformers destroyed images that depicted the God they supported. The images were inherently offensive because, as Calvin wrote, ‘God himself is the sole and proper witness of himself’.⁹⁴ To depict God in any form was to belittle his majesty. In their more altruistic moments, it was God’s majesty that iconoclasts attempted to preserve. That is why the present project argues that Dowsing and many English iconoclasts premised their actions on the preservation of an ideal, not the mere destruction of idols.

William Dowsing’s iconoclasm stands out because it was the culmination of an iconoclastic movement in the 1640s. The run-up to the ordinance of 1643 stretched back even further. As Aston writes, ‘The legislative and destructive deeds of the 1640’s were the outcome of a hundred years’ intermittent but cumulative effort’.⁹⁵ Julie Spraggon indicated that Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth used official image-breaking to ‘establish religious change’.⁹⁶ The 1570 edition of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* hailed the virtues of the Edwardian ‘reformation’ with its instances of official and unofficial iconoclasm.⁹⁷ Through the reigns of Mary, Elizabeth, James and Charles iconophobic factions became more settled in their convictions. Political unrest mirrored the iconoclastic furore as instances of iconoclastic riots increased from 1640-1641.⁹⁸ Momentum grew on more official levels as well. In 1641 the House of Commons issued instructions to church wardens regarding the removal of images.

⁹⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Library of Christian Classics; V.20, 21 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1961), I.11.1, p. 100.

⁹⁵ Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts*, p. 93.

⁹⁶ Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm in the English Civil War*, p. xi.

⁹⁷ See the preface of Margaret Aston’s, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*.

⁹⁸ Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts*, p. 11.

They based the instructions on Exodus 34:13, 'Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles'. In other words, they called for images to be removed and destroyed. The parliamentary ordinance of 28 August 1643 formally declared the sentiments shared by an increasingly militant faction of society.

Dowsing operated within one of the 'two great waves' of iconoclasm that Keith Thomas described. Instances of iconoclasm occurring under Edward VI were sporadic when compared to the 1640s. Edward's reforms were also quickly overturned when Mary reinstated Catholicism in England. Thomas called the iconoclasm of the 1640s a 'fresh orgy of destruction' because of its thorough application.⁹⁹ As Thomas argued, 'When the Long Parliament met in 1640, complaints were converted into violent action'.¹⁰⁰ No doubt, civil war iconoclasm was a violent reaction to William Laud's policies. But Spraggon cautioned against seeing puritan iconoclasm as a simple reaction. Spraggon wrote,

The puritan iconoclasm of the 1640's was not, however, only a reacting force, but developed its own positive, forward-moving agenda. While the resurgence of a large scale iconoclastic movement was initially a response to a more tolerant approach to the use of images in churches, the iconoclasts were not content to dismantle the recent trappings of the Laudian church but used the opportunity to address the 'neglect' of previous reformers and eventually widen the range of objects targeted.¹⁰¹

Spraggon identified an important component of Puritanism during this period. Their mission was not only to correct the archbishop and king, but to establish the ideals that took shape in the sixteenth century Reformation. The Reformation in England had stalled and needed to be restarted. In many ways, iconoclasm was the ignition needed to mobilize the Reformation.

⁹⁹ Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm," pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm," p. 18.

¹⁰¹ Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm in the English Civil War*, p. 250.

It is difficult to identify uniform motivations among iconoclasts. Even among Dowsing's contemporaries motivations may have varied. Richard Culmer of Kent and Sir Robert Harley of London shared Dowsing's abhorrence for images. Culmer became infamous in December of 1643 for personally cudgelling an ornate stained glass image of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral.¹⁰² Cliffe elucidated Robert Harley's personal convictions regarding images which fuelled his leadership of an iconoclastic committee in London.¹⁰³ We cannot know if the iconoclasts shared identical motivations for iconoclasm. Margaret Aston summarized, in clear terms, her view of iconoclastic motivations:

It takes great spirit to destroy great things. But I do not think that the iconoclasts were great-hearted. There was too much spirit of rejection in them for that. Certainly they were aware of the greatness of their spiritual undertaking. They regarded themselves, indeed, as having taken on a task comparable to the first conversion of the world. Unless we accept this as their premise, we shall fail to grasp the essence of their destructive and constructive works.¹⁰⁴

One flaw in Aston's summary is the labelling of images as 'great' things that had been destroyed. This was not a universal sentiment. Also, identifying a 'spirit of rejection' is a matter of perspective. One could argue, and this project does, that iconoclasm was fuelled largely by what iconoclasts had accepted. However, it is a fruitless exercise to argue if Laudians or puritans had the purer motivation, because both groups judged purity by different standards. It may be more fruitful to discover what corporate rationale puritan iconoclasts used to justify iconoclasm. Public statements, like books and parliamentary fast sermons, help in constructing recurring themes in the corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm. This project portrays William Dowsing and he could well be the embodiment of the puritan rationale in the 1640s. The annotations in

¹⁰² Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, pp. 84-85.

¹⁰³ Cliffe, *Puritan Gentry*, pp. 11-14.

¹⁰⁴ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 9.

his reading material show how he, as an individual iconoclast, embraced the corporate rationale for iconoclasm.

V. Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore the question of William Dowsing's identity. Dowsing could be said to be the quintessential seventeenth-century puritan layman. His 'godly' ideals of stern commitment, biblicism, providentialism and anti-popery took shape in Suffolk, a region where Puritanism flourished under the influence of local gentry and clergy. He shared a fairly close association with influential puritans who affected local and national politics. With the pages of scripture shaping his worldview he saw the civil war as a necessary phase in God's providential dealings with England. He carried out Manchester's commission with the precision of a soldier who had the full support of his commanding officer. Although it took place in a military context, his iconoclasm was not a secular endeavour. It was the ritual execution of 'papist' idols. The necessity of the execution was explicit in Dowsing's brand of Reformed theology..

A picture of Dowsing is incomplete without a clear delineation of iconoclastic thought within that theological tradition. Therefore, the next chapter takes on a broader scope, examining the iconoclastic component which ran throughout the history of Reformed thought and how it came into conflict with Laud's 'innovations' of the 1630s. Historical and theological developments in the decades preceding the 1640s provide the hinterland for understanding the kind of rationale that gave rise to William Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign.

Chapter 3

Prelude to a Campaign: A History of Iconoclastic Thoughts and Laudian Deeds

I. The Scandal of the Image

When Moses delayed in returning from the peak of Sinai the children of Israel took matters into their own hands. They knew that Moses had gone to meet with God and to bring back his will for them – but he had taken too long. With their leader gone they wanted a visible sign to follow as they continued the exodus from Egypt. With Aaron's approval, the people fashioned their golden earrings into a calf, calling it 'the god that would go before them'. Moses soon descended the slopes of Sinai carrying stone tablets and fresh revelation. Upon seeing these Sinaitic innovations,

Moses wrath waxed hote, and he cast the tables out of his handes, and brake them in pieces beneath the mountaine. After, he tooke the calfe, which they had made, and burned it in the fire, and ground it unto powder, and strowed it upon the water, & made the children of Israel drinke of it.¹

So began the relationship between religious images and destruction. Moses' attack on the golden calf was a sign of things to come.

In many ways Reformed iconoclasts saw themselves in the place of Moses. With Scripture in hand they beheld scenes of horrid idolatry among God's people. As for Dowsing, nine of the ten verses he cited at the beginning of his journal were taken from the Moses narrative in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.² Dowsing, like other Reformed iconoclasts, saw himself continuing the work that Moses began by shattering the idols of God's people for their own protection. The thesis now turns to examine this component of the Reformed tradition

¹ Exodus 32:19. All biblical quotations in this chapter will come from *The Geneva Bible* (1587 version). A fully searchable version of this text is available at <http://www.studydrive.org/desk/?query=ge+1&t=gen>. Quotations will retain original spelling but alter capitals and punctuation to reflect modern usage.

² Chapter Four (4.II) closely examines these passages in relation to Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign.

and to explore how it matured among reformers and came to be shared by seventeenth-century puritans like Dowsing.

This chapter proceeds by developing two arguments. The first claim is that as Reformed Orthodoxy solidified and became more articulate, so did the movement's iconoclastic rationale. The rationale had at its heart the necessity of protecting the laity from the seductive dangers of religious images. As Richard Muller has indicated, the factors that refined Reformed Orthodoxy were polemics, pedagogical needs, systematic issues and the quest for philosophical breadth and coherence.³ These same elements helped the iconoclastic rationale to mature. William Dowsing was the recipient of a mature, third-generation Reformed iconoclastic rationale. The second argument is that, in the Reformed tradition, iconoclasm became an important tool in preserving the faith 'once delivered to all the saints'. Iconoclasm was, in part, an attack on the visual worship of the Catholic Church, motivated by a desire to preserve the purity of the church catholic. This ideal trickled down to William Dowsing as a layman in seventeenth-century Suffolk. He observed the 'idolatry' of God's people and acted in a way that he believed would secure England as the nation where 'true religion' could flourish. The first half of this chapter reads more like a history of iconoclastic ideas than a history of iconoclastic acts. The second half shows how the iconoclastic thesis met its antithesis in England through the ecclesiastical policies implemented by Charles I and William Laud. Dowsing's iconoclasm was a by product of a long-standing theological dispute.

The fundamental impetus for iconoclastic passion came from the second command inscribed on Moses' broken tablets:

Thou shalt make thee no graven image, neither any similitude of things that are in heaven above, neither that are in the earth beneath, nor that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bowe downe to them, neither serve them: for I am the Lord thy God, a

³ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, v. 1, p. 65.

jealous God, visiting the iniquitie of the fathers upon the children, upon the third generation and upon the fourth of them that hate me: And shewing mercie unto thousandes to them that love me, & keepe my commandemets.⁴

It is interesting that Dowsing does not cite these particular verses at the beginning of the journal of his iconoclasm. He does, however, cite a restatement of this command from Leviticus 26:1: 'Ye shall make you none idoles nor graven image, neither reare you up any pillar, neither shall ye set any image of stone in your land to bow downe to it: for I am the Lord your God.' Presumably, Dowsing failed to cite the second commandment in Exodus 20 because the Decalogue already loomed large over all puritan endeavours. For the godly, the second commandment was truth, ever-present and assumed.

The Sinaitic prohibition of graven images created much debate through the centuries. Many seventeenth century iconoclasts like Dowsing may have been unaware that the key issues in the image question emerged from the 'iconoclast controversy'. The 'controversy' refers to an explosion of tension among Byzantine Christians over the place of images in worship in the eighth century. Hostilities began when the Byzantine Emperor Leo II produced an edict in 726 calling all religious images idolatrous. During this period, the leading proponent of religious images was John of Damascus, whose *Treatise Against Those who Attack Holy Images* (ca. 730) would later provide the philosophical and theological basis for the approval of icons at the Second Council of Nicea in 787, the ecumenical council called to settle the dispute over images.⁵ John of Damascus placed the argument over images within the realm of Christology, which added richness to his arguments since they were linked with fourth century Christological debates. Iconodules (the Damascene chief among them) argued that Christ's incarnation made

⁴ Exodus 20:4-6, Geneva Bible (1587).

⁵ James R. Payton, "John of Damascus on Human Cognition: An Element in His Apologetic for Icons," *Church History* 65, no. 2 (1996), p. 173.

images of the divine permissible.⁶ Iconoclasts (led by Emperor Constantine V, son of Leo II) held that images of Christ failed on two fronts. First, if they were fashioned in an attempt to represent Christ's divine and human natures, they failed by marring the Godhead through a confused mingling with humanity. This would be tantamount to monophysitism, the belief that Christ had but one nature – a position condemned by Chalcedon in 451. Second, if they only attempted to represent Christ's human nature, they presented an incomplete and divided picture of Christ. The 'dividing' of Christ's natures strongly resembled Nestorianism, also condemned by the Christological definition reached at Chalcedon. Therefore, iconoclasts concluded that since images fell short, regardless of their intent, the church was better served without them. Iconodules countered these arguments by claiming that images of Christ were more concerned with 'person' than with 'nature', and could therefore represent the person of Jesus Christ as God presented him to humanity.⁷

Ambrosios Giakalis delineated theological disputes in the iconoclast controversy that would be central to the Reformation image debate in the sixteenth century and beyond.⁸ For example, in order to demonstrate clearly their desire to avoid 'idolatry', the Iconodule faction at Nicea II posited a division between veneration of images (*dulia* or *proskynesis*) and the worship of God (*latria*). John of Damascus helped to articulate this clarification by employing a decidedly philosophical approach to biblical passages on worship. Like Gregory of Nyssa before

⁶ 'Iconodule' is the transliteration of the Greek *εικονοδουλος*, 'one who serves images'. John of Damascus explained his position thus: 'In former times God, who is without form or body, could never be depicted. But now when God is seen in the flesh conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see'. See John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies against Those Who Attack the Divine Images* (Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), p. 23. See also, Nick Trakakis, "What Was the Iconoclastic Controversy All About?" *Theandros: The Online Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology and Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (2005), <http://www.theandros.com/iconoclast.html#4>.

⁷ Nick Trakakis, "What was the Iconoclastic Controversy About?" Also on these issues see Patrick Henry, "What Was the Iconoclastic Controversy About?" *Church History* 45, no. 1 (1976), pp. 23ff. Ambrosios Giakalis also argued that iconoclastic controversy rested largely on Christological concerns. See Ambrosios Giakalis, *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 130-131.

⁸ Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*. See also Edward James Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930).

him, the Damascene dressed many of his theological arguments in philosophical clothing. The result was a presentation of doctrine with philosophical coherence, but he also created categories not explicitly found in the biblical text.⁹ ‘Sophistry’ of this kind was the basis for many of the Reformers’ criticisms of the conclusions reached by the Damascene and the Second Council of Nicea. Calvin did not mince words when critiquing the judgment of Nicea II: ‘In short, so disgusting are their absurdities that I am ashamed even to mention them’.¹⁰ Regardless of the argument’s strength, the Iconodule faction held sway in the eighth century, leading to the formal approval of images in 787.¹¹ The debate had lasting significance: seventeenth century Laudians also wished to preserve the *dulia*/*latria* distinction. Many of Calvin’s theological descendents in the seventeenth century, like Dowsing, dismissed any supposed distinction between *dulia* and *latria* and forbade the veneration of any religious image.¹² Dowsing’s iconoclastic campaign in the 1640s was another instalment in this recurring dispute.

English Lollards continued the tradition of iconoclastic thought in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Many of their pro-vernacular and anti-imagery characteristics anticipated the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Like later Puritanism, Lollardy was not a monolith, but embodied a varied set of reform efforts. However, Margaret Aston has argued that ‘Opposition to images can be regarded as one of the most consistent features of the Lollard heresy, and was a criterion for distinguishing its adherents at the beginning of the movement and its end’.¹³

Catholic authorities focused their attention on Lollardy in Dowsing’s home county of Suffolk in

⁹ Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Historical Theology: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), p. 154.

¹⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.14, p. 114. ‘Denique tam putidae sunt insulsiatates, ut eas referre me quoque pigeat’, John Calvin and Peter Barth, *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta*, vol. 3 (Monachii: Chr. Kaiser, 1926), p. 103. A further discussion of Calvin’s counter arguments will follow in this chapter.

¹¹ A second phase of tension over icons would erupt in 814, when Byzantine Emperor Leo V began to violently persecute iconophiles. There would be an ebb and flow to iconoclastic fervour in the region until 843, when Empress Theodora approved the veneration of images in the Byzantine Church.

¹² Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.11.

¹³ Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 136-137.

1428 as ‘part of the wider campaign against the Lollards’.¹⁴ The movement suffered great persecution in the centuries preceding the Reformation, but the Lollards succeeded in fuelling an anti-Catholic and iconoclastic fire in England.

Many of the controversies surrounding the second commandment came to a head in the Reformation. One question centred on whether the ‘second commandment’ should be called the second commandment at all. This dispute continued into the post-Reformation era until the present. While puritan Reformed theology assumed a distinct truth articulated in the second commandment, Catholic tradition subsumed it as a part of the first commandment, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me’.¹⁵ The Catholic rendering appears more artificial than the Reformed version for two reasons. Both reasons centre on clauses beginning with the Hebrew word *לֹא*. This idiom marks the beginning of a prohibition (e.g. ‘Thou shalt not murder’ = *תִּרְצַח לֹא*). First, there are two distinct verbs used to differentiate between the first and second commandments. The first commandment rests on the clause ‘You shall not have’ (*לֹא יִהְיֶה*). Whereas the second commandment reads ‘You shall not make’ (*לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה*). Therefore, to Reformed exegetes combining the two seemed to contradict the intention of the writer. Second, the command forbidding covetousness contains a series of items all unified by one clause ‘You shall not covet’ (*לֹא תַחְסֹד*). The verb repeats in this command for items such as ‘house’ and ‘wife’, but repetition does not necessarily constitute a separate command. The argument over the number of commands would be inconsequential if there were no biblical mandate confining these commands to ten statements. However, Deuteronomy 4:13 states that the Lord declared his covenant in ‘Ten Commandments’ which he wrote on ‘two tablets of stone’. But the

¹⁴ Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, p. 75.

¹⁵ Exodus 20:3, Geneva Bible (1587). There were still Ten Commandments in the Decalogue according to both systems. Roman Catholics divided the prohibition of covetousness into two commands, distinguishing between ‘thy neighbour’s wife’ and ‘thy neighbour’s goods’.

significance of this disagreement for this thesis is how a seemingly minor divergence of interpretation helped to produce worship practices that were poles apart. Catholics fully embraced and defended the use of images in worship. Many Reformed Protestants fought to rid the church of them.

Obviously, the different numbering schemes reflect a much deeper theological divide. Reformed and Catholic exegetes each had presuppositions regarding worship that may have driven their understanding of the commandments first given at Sinai. However, the dispute over how to group the prohibitions existed between Protestant groups as well. A divergence between Luther and Calvin in regard to the place of religious images stemmed from differing notions of what the second commandment was. In Calvin's mind the first commandment consisted of one prohibition: 'You shall have no other gods before me'. The second commandment was similar but distinct: 'You shall not make for yourself any graven image'. Luther, however, followed the Catholic tradition of reading the two prohibitions together. Thus, in Luther's thought the prohibition of graven images was a sub-clause of the first commandment. Calvin responded to this method by writing, 'their [Catholic] division of the commandments was unknown in a purer age'.¹⁶

A cursory look at catechisms prepared by Luther and Calvin makes their disagreement clear. Consider Luther's Small Catechism of 1529:

(The First Commandment) "You shall have no other gods." What does this mean?
 Answer: We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.
 (The Second Commandment) "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." What does this mean? Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not use his name to curse, swear, practice magic, lie, or deceive, but in every time of need call upon him, praise him, and give him thanks.¹⁷

¹⁶ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.8.12, p. 378.

¹⁷ Martin Luther, "Luther's Small Catechism (1529)," *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, ed. Mark A. Noll (Leicester: Apollos, 1991), p. 67.

Juxtapose this with Calvin's catechism for children in Geneva (1537):

[After reciting the prohibition of graven images] Question: Does this prohibit us from painting anything or sculpting any likeness?

Answer: No, but it does forbid these two things: that we make images either for representing God or for worshipping him. Why? Because there is no resemblance between him who is Spirit eternal and incomprehensible, and corporeal, corruptible and dead figures.¹⁸

Luther did not emphasise what Calvin considered to be a separate commandment. In fact, Luther does not mention 'graven images' in the catechism. As John Leith argued, 'Calvin's protest against idolatry [was] one of the dominating themes of his theology and churchmanship'.

Conversely, Luther did not see 'the image question' as such a central issue.¹⁹

Calvin understood the image prohibition to be a self-contained command. He also broadened the scope of the command to prohibit any innovation in worship. He, and many Reformed Christians after him, employed the second commandment to address innovation as a distinct category of sin. The following section of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* encapsulates his attitude toward images:

When I ponder the intended use of churches, some how or other it seems to me unworthy of their holiness for them to take on images other than those living and symbolical ones which the Lord has consecrated by his Word. I mean Baptism and the Lord's Supper and

¹⁸ Quoted in Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, p. 90.

¹⁹ John Leith, "Calvin's Polemic Against Idolatry," *Soli Deo Gloria. New Testament Studies in Honor of William Childs Robinson*, ed. J. McDowell Richards (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1968), p. 111. See also I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's Concept of the Law* (Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick Publications, 1992), p. 115. James Preus argued that for Luther, images fell under the category of mere structure. Although Luther held that eventually the structure would need to be changed (i.e. moving away from the use of images), that change could come slowly and the significance of 'images' would not be monumental in the grand scheme. Preus wrote: 'According to Luther, you cannot change structure before you change consciences.' Strangely, the infamous 'sale of indulgences' were part of the existing 'structure' as well. It seems Luther saw fit to change the structure first in that case. See James Preus, *Carlstadt's Ordinaciones and Luther's Liberty: A Study of the Wittenberg Movement 1521-1522* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 71-72. Luther also had a more nuanced understanding of adiaphora, arguing that images were acceptable as long as they were not perceived to be a meritorious 'good work'. For a fuller explanation of Luther's concept of images see Carl C. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979). This project will refer to the prohibition of graven images as the second commandment because the Reformed approach has a better case from a syntactical perspective.

other rites by which our eyes must be too intensely gripped and too sharply affected to seek other images forged by human ingenuity.²⁰

In Calvin's mind, God had provided believers with all the images they needed in the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism. Calvin's fears of belittling God's majesty with man-made images are summarized in his oft-quoted pun, 'Deum affigant ubicunque affingunt'.²¹ Many later Reformed believers, who followed much of what Calvin taught, followed his opposition to religious imagery.

Iconoclasts like William Dowsing did not destroy images because they were merely deficient. They destroyed images because they perceived them to be dangerous. If the Catholic system of promoting religious imagery went unchecked, they argued that the laity and the Gospel itself were in peril. Reformed 'iconophobes' felt this threat on a very personal level. Calvin was mostly reticent about his early life, but in the preface to his Commentary on the Book of Psalms (dated July 22, 1557), Calvin remembered being 'too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire'. He stated that the trappings of popery had so confused his mind that he was only awakened as a young adult when 'God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life'.²² Luther's more radical colleague, Andreas Karlstadt, expressed a similar captivity to the system of Roman Catholic imagery. Karlstadt remembered, 'My heart since childhood has been brought

²⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.13, p. 113. 'Quum tamen expendo in quem usum destinata sint templa, nescio quomodo indignum mihi videtur eorum sanctitate, ut alias recipiant imagines quam vivas illas et iconicas, quas verbo suo Dominus consecravat: Baptismum intelligo et Coenam Domini, cum aliis ceremoniis quibus oculos nostros et studiosius detineri, et vividius affici convenit quam ut alias hominum ingenio fabrefactus requirant.' *Calvini Opera Selecta*, p. 103. For this initial section on Calvin, the Latin text will be provided where a quote represents a pivotal argument in Calvin's thought.

²¹ 'They fasten God wherever they fashion him.' *Calvini Opera Selecta*, p. 100. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.9, p. 109.

²² John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 5 vols., Calvin's Commentaries (Edinburgh: Printed for The Calvin Translation Society [by The Edinburgh Printing Co.], 1845).

up in the veneration of images, and a harmful fear has entered me which I gladly would rid myself of, and cannot'.²³ Perhaps this fear led Karlstadt to his more strident attack on images in Wittenberg.

Furthermore, in many ways the Reformation was not an attempt to create a new church. It was an effort to preserve the faith 'Once delivered to all the saints' (Jude 1:3). In Zurich, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) took up the image question in relation to the doctrine of justification. He was convinced that the laity erected statues and other images in an effort to merit salvation. Although Zwingli strongly opposed individual iconoclasm, he worked through the political system in Zurich to effect a relatively comprehensive removal of religious images during his life.²⁴ Again, he worked to preserve the true faith of the Gospel, not to create a new church. The Reformers' frequent appeals to the early church Fathers also show their desire to preserve the ancient faith. Calvin attempted to demonstrate a link between his opposition to images and the 'holy fathers':

For about five hundred years, during which religion was still flourishing, Christian churches were commonly empty of images. Thus it was when the purity of the ministry had somewhat degenerated that they were first introduced for the adornment of churches...Are we to think that those holy fathers would have allowed the church to go for so long without something they adjudged useful and salutary? Of course it was because they saw in it either no usefulness or very little, but very much danger, and they repudiated it out of deliberation and reason, rather than overlooked it out of ignorance and negligence.²⁵

In Dowsing's generation, preachers often referred to the Reformation as the recovery of a church that was consistent with the church fathers. For example, Dowsing owned a Thanksgiving Sermon preached before Parliament by John Gauden on 29 November 1640. Dowsing drew a

²³ Quoted in Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, p. 91.

²⁴ Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Art: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe*, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp 52-54.

²⁵ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.13, p. 113. The key line (beginning, 'Thus it was when the purity of the ministry') reads, 'Ergo tunc primum in ornamentum templorum ascitae sunt quum ministerii sinceritas nonnihil degenerasset'.

thin line to mark a paragraph in which Gauden preached that Catholics and Laudians ‘seeke to abuse antiquitie, and patronize their owne errorrs, by using those names and words to other intents, and things, than ever was dreamed by the Ancient Church’.²⁶ In other words, Gauden tapped into the common idea among puritans that Catholicism (and the Laudian movement) commandeered the writings of the church Fathers, forcing them toward an unimagined and unintended destination.

II. Iconoclastic Thoughts in Reformed Orthodoxy

Since iconoclastic thought stretches back to Sinai this chapter does not argue that opposition to images began in the Reformation, or that Reformers were the first to have a coherent rationale for their opposition to images. However, this section begins in the Reformation period because it marked a significant maturation in the articulation of iconoclastic thought. Also, since William Dowsing operated in the realm of Reformed Orthodoxy, it is most appropriate to begin where many of the facets of his understanding found their voice.

Writing in 1637, the Scottish minister George Gillespie cited John Calvin as an authority on Scripture’s role in determining worship practices.²⁷ He mentioned Calvin, among other sources such as Zanchius, in an effort to establish the historical legitimacy of requiring a positive biblical command for elements in worship. Gillespie’s arguments voiced the concerns of Reformed theologians in Scotland and England in the run up to the 1640s. They believed that their cries for the reform of worship were rooted in the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

²⁶ John Gauden, *The Love of Truth and Peace a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, Assembled in Parliament, Novemb. 29, 1640 / by Iohn Gauden* (London: Printed by G.M. for Andrew Crooke, 1641), p. 33. In Dowsing’s collection see II.1.33.

²⁷ George Gillespie, *A Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies, Obtruded Upon the Church of Scotland Wherein Not Only Our Ovvne Argumemts [Sic] against the Same Are Strongly Confirmed, but Likewise the Ansveres and Defences of Our Opposites, Such as Hooker, Mortoune ... Forbesse, &C. Particularly Confuted* ([Leiden]: Printed [by W. Christiaens] 1637), part 3, p. 122.

Writings from the sixteenth century had popular appeal in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are a myriad of examples from which to choose, but this section highlights key thinkers and writers in the development of an iconoclastic rationale among English puritans that would eventually sustain Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign.

i. Martin Bucer and John Calvin

Scholars are relatively certain that William Dowsing was familiar with the writings of John Calvin. The second entry in the iconoclasm journal recounts Dowsing's impromptu debate with the Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge. As he fended off verbal attacks from the Fellows, Dowsing records that one of his counter arguments came when he 'cited Calvin, and in his Institutions'.²⁸ Calvin's language regarding the image question permeated the Reformed community. However, his voice was part of a choir of Reformed hostility toward religious images.

Martin Bucer (1491-1551) was a first generation reformer who preached the Reformation from his pulpit in Landstuhl in the Palatinate. His very presence made him a significant figure in the Reformation of southern Germany. However, it was his writing that made him a significant figure in the English Reformation. In 1535 English publishers translated and distributed Bucer's *A Treatise Declaring and Showing that Images Are Not To Be Suffered in Churches*. Bucer's arguments helped to define clearly the iconoclastic rationale for English readers and hearers.²⁹ He countered long-standing defences for images, defences which seemingly reconciled graven

²⁸ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 161, entry 2. S.L. Sadler addresses the finer points of Dowsing's arguments in the essay contained in Cooper's volume, "Dowsing's Arguments with the Fellows of Pembroke," pp. 56-66. This project will interact with Sadler's treatment of Dowsing's arguments below in Chapter Four, "Dowsing's Iconoclasm: A Theology Applied".

²⁹ Martin Bucer, *A Treatise Declaring and Showing That Images Are Not to Be Suffered in Churches*, ed. William Marshall ([S.l.]: Printed for W. Marshall, 1535).

images with a commandment forbidding them. One of those defences was that images represented books for the unlearned in Christendom. Here, Bucer responds with a familiar iconoclastic retort:

And as for that which some me[n] do fayne, that images are the bo[o]ks of laye men (for so they say) it is not only a we[a]ke reason, but also a fol[l]y: as who should saye that god, of all moste wysest and which is very wisdom itself ... through malice did withhold from his owne people such manner of bo[o]kes and monuments whereby they might be put in remembrance of godly things.³⁰

Bucer's work enjoyed exceeding popularity in England and went into a second printing in 1536.³¹ The timing of the publication was significant as it coincided with Henry VIII's move to dissolve the monasteries in England. There was also a growing anti-Catholic sentiment in England occasioned by Henry's rift with Rome after his divorce from Catherine of Aragon in 1533. Bucer's tract flowed easily into the anti-papal zeitgeist of sixteenth-century England.

Remembering Bucer's contribution to the iconoclastic movement helps prevent the folly of naming Calvin as the sole author of the 'Calvinist' opposition to images. Calvin published his first, and very brief, edition of the *Institutes* in the same year that Bucer's work went into its second printing in English. Historians often paint Calvin as a solitary figure far in front of other second-generation Reformers. However, in many ways, his positions on images in the church were similar, if not identical, to a few senior reformers who had gone before him, including Bucer. Tracing the development of iconoclastic thought within Reformed Orthodoxy from Calvin to Dowsing does not imply that the line between them was straight or that it had only two points, Geneva and Suffolk. Reformed Orthodoxy developed within a multi-national context. As Muller writes 'Dutch, Swiss, German, French, English and Scottish theologians all

³⁰ Bucer, *A Treatise Declaring and Showing*, p.36. Letters which clarify the original word have been added. However, no original letters have been removed.

³¹ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 386. See also Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, pp. 92-93.

contributed to the development of Reformed Orthodoxy and consistently dialogued with each other across national and international boundaries'.³² In fact it was Bucer who requested that Calvin present *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* at the fourth Diet of Speyer in 1544.³³ Calvin delivered this apology for the Reformation before the Holy Roman Emperor, which also included a denunciation of images. Calvin argued,

Do not men pay to images and statues the very same reverence which they pay to God? It is an error to suppose that there is any difference between this madness and that of the heathen ... But some subtle disputant will object, that there are divers species of adoration [*dulia* and *latria*] ... as if these subtle distinctions were either known or present to the minds of those who prostrate themselves before images.³⁴

When placed in the broader context of the treatise, we see the Reformed faith's iconoclastic rationale maturing in Calvin's hands. He was beginning to codify a systematic response to the claims of the Catholic Church in order to protect the church catholic. The crux of Calvin's argument was that defending the use of images by means of a philosophical rationale (as did John of Damascus and Nicea II in the 8th century) does not necessarily give images scriptural validity. The application of his argument is that philosophical distinctions in the mind of theologians can produce concrete idolatrous worship when practiced by worshippers who could not consistently hold such distinctions. Reformers identified medieval abuses as evidences for the dangers of images. As Margaret Aston described the place of images in the medieval church, 'Imagery passed from being a means of instruction to being a means of communication between worshipper and worshipped'.³⁵ This was unacceptable from the Reformed perspective.

The later Reformed position, evidenced in the Westminster Confession of 1646, dovetailed nicely onto Calvin's argument that the laity needed protection from artificial worship

³² Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, p. 28.

³³ John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church, Tracts and Treatises*, vol. 1, ed. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1958), pp. 121ff.

³⁴ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 131.

³⁵ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 20.

practices. The Westminster divines' language became more explicit. Their argument amounted to: 'Do not use images in worship. A commandment forbids them. They invite inappropriate adoration regardless of distinction'.³⁶ Calvin himself distinguished between images used in worship and images used for different purposes. He was not against distinctions, *per se*. His problems with the *dulia/latria* contrast were that it seemed to foster confusion among the laity and it created categories not based in any clear teaching of Scripture. Since the distinction was invalid in Calvin's mind, so was the system that made images central in worship.

Calvin's defence of the Reformation helped to secure Charles V's continued toleration of the reform movement. Thus, Calvin solidified his place as a leading second generation reformer. Muller rightly categorised Calvin among the codifiers, those theologians who began to add systematic coherence to the Reformation.³⁷ By the 1559 edition, Calvin's *Institutes* had gone beyond many of the arguments of his predecessors, providing an efficient argument against the use of images in worship.

In 1562 Thomas Norton translated Calvin's 1559 edition of *Institutes* into English. Thus, Calvin's words could enter more easily into common parlance in England. His arguments were not new, especially among Elizabethan puritans. However, the publication of the *Institutes* in English provided greater access to an orderly presentation of 'Reformed' positions on matters ranging from civil government to ecclesiology.

Calvin spent a considerable amount of time discussing images in the *Institutes*. He employed arguments from scriptural exposition, appealed to ecumenical councils and veered into

³⁶ See The Westminster Confession of Faith, 21:1. It reads, 'the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture'.

³⁷ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, p. 30. Muller differentiates between an 'inaugurator' (e.g. Luther or Bucer) and a 'codifier' (e.g. Calvin or Vermigli).

the occasional rhetorical tirade. Theologians have attempted to identify a central doctrine, or dogma, in Calvin's thought to explain his arguments against the use of 'dead' images in worship. Muller's method of historical and theological interpretation stands at odds with this method. Muller rejects the notion of a central dogma, while others promote unifying themes within the writings of key figures. For example, Millard Erickson delineates a 'central interpretive motif' for Martin Luther (salvation by grace), John Calvin (the sovereignty of God), Karl Barth (the Word of God) and Paul Tillich (the ground of being).³⁸ Muller's move away from such a scheme of interpretation has two benefits. First, by employing Muller's approach, readers are left to read Calvin's writings without forcing passages to submit to an artificial rubric. Second, Muller's approach acknowledges that early codifiers of the Reformation, such as Calvin, Vermigli and Musculus, sought to centralize the text of Scripture, explaining passages in their context. Therefore, applying Muller's approach, Calvin's 'position' concerning the use of images should not be seen as the by-product of a central dogma, but the specific application of a text of Scripture: the second commandment. However, Calvin also supported many of his conclusions by claiming historical precedent. Here we will divide Calvin's iconoclastic rationale into two categories, his appeal to Scripture and his appeal to the judgment of the Church.

First, Calvin's scriptural arguments centre on the Bible's prohibition of innovation in worship. In Calvin's mind, God used the incarnation of Christ, Scriptural revelation and the Sacraments to tell humanity all that they needed to know of him. Therefore, men did not need to create images to learn anything of God. Calvin alluded to the writing of Hilary of Poitiers when

³⁸ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), p. 80. For Muller's position see *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, p. 39. Muller writes: 'It is rather useless to juxtapose the "christocentrism" of Reformation theology with various "theocentric" options when none of the theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformed evidences interest in such dogmatic centers.'

he wrote, ‘God himself is the sole and proper witness of himself’.³⁹ Therefore, God ‘repudiates all likenesses, pictures and other signs by which the superstitious have thought he will be near them’.⁴⁰ In this statement, Calvin addressed those whom he believed were dissatisfied with God’s revelation. They did not feel ‘close enough’ to God, so they brought him near by erecting forbidden, ‘dead’ images. Calvin argued that such a desire, while predicated on a worthy intent, spurned the sufficiency of God’s revelation in Scripture, the Sacraments and in Christ. Yet, Randall Zachman has shown that Calvin did indeed emphasize certain ‘living icons’ through which God manifested a truth that could only be fully understood through hearing of the word of God, the Bible. The living icons were God-ordained symbols of his presence such as nature, human interaction, or the Sacraments.⁴¹ However, the nature of the living images only heightened the heinousness of trying to replicate, through human innovation, God’s chosen methods of manifestation.

The natural counter attack to Calvin’s argument would be to cite biblical examples of God’s people worshipping through many images that God approved. One oft-cited example was a description of the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 25:17-18:

Also thou shalt make a Mercie seate of pure golde, two cubites and an halfe long, and a cubite and an halfe broade. And thou shalt make two Cherubims of golde: of worke beaten out with the hammer shalt thou make them at the two endes of the Merciseate.⁴²

Those who defended religious images by pointing to the cherubim on the mercy seat did not earn Calvin’s respect. He called them ‘raving madmen’ for the ‘paltry images’ did not give entrance

³⁹ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.1, p. 100. ‘quia Deus ipse solus est de se idoneus testis’, *Calvini Opera Selecta*, p. 88.

⁴⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.1, p. 100. ‘sed absque exceptione repudiate simulachra omnia, picturas, aliaque signa quibus eum sibi propinquum fore putarunt superstitiosi’.

⁴¹ Zachman, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin*, pp. 2-3.

⁴² Geneva Bible of 1587, <http://www.studylight.org/desk/?l=en&query=Exodus+25%3A17-18§ion=0&translation=gen&oq=ge%25201&new=1&nb=mt&ng=1&ncc=1>.

into the use of images but showed how images were ‘not suited to represent God’s mysteries’.⁴³

In other words Moses placed images on the mercy seat to protect eyes from gazing directly onto the presence of God. So the God-initiated placement of the cherubim was a warning against, more than a warrant for, images.

Calvin responded to other scriptural examples of images in the *Institutes*. His counter arguments all made similar points because Calvin’s understanding of the second commandment was the foundation of all other scriptural arguments against images. Calvin’s method of interpreting the commandments allowed him to address a variety of issues through seemingly narrow prohibitions. Book II of the *Institutes* contains Calvin’s exposition of the Ten Commandments and an explanation of his method:

The commandments and prohibitions always contain more than is expressed in words. But we ought so to temper this principle that it may not be for us like a Lesbian rule, on which we rely to twist Scripture without restraint, thus making anything we please out of anything ... that is, in each commandment to ponder why it was given to us ... if it pleases God, the opposite displeases him; if this displeases, the opposite pleases; if he commands this, he forbids the opposite; if he forbids this, he enjoins the opposite.⁴⁴

By reading the second commandment with such wide applicability, later reformers could articulate iconoclastic thought in positive terms. An example not related to images will clarify the point: How should Christians interpret ‘You shall not murder’ according to Calvin’s system? Is the opposite of killing simply ‘not killing’ or is it ‘giving life’? Calvin said that it actually meant both. Not only should Christians avoid wronging someone in this way, but they should also do all they can to improve their neighbour’s life. When applied to the second commandment, the prohibition of carnal images actually implied something positive and spiritual. God’s people worship him in spirit, not stone:

⁴³ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.3, p. 102.

⁴⁴ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.8.8, pp. 374-5. The first line reads, ‘plus inesse simpler in praeceptis ac interdictis quam verbis exprimatur’.

To sum up, [in this command] he wholly calls us back and withdraws us from petty carnal observances, which our stupid minds, crassly conceiving of God, are wont to devise. Then he makes us conform to his lawful worship, that is, a spiritual worship established by himself. Moreover, he marks the grossest fault in this transgression, outward idolatry.⁴⁵

It was precisely this spiritual worship of the ‘true church’ that Reformers like Calvin, Bucer and even Dowsing attempted to preserve. Dowsing’s iconoclasm represented a desire among puritans to maintain spiritual worship over and against the ‘carnality’ of popery. One of Dowsing’s marginal notes in Thomas Dighton’s work hints at this ‘Calvinist’ principle, ‘all persons that desire life are tied to the Worde and not to carnall reason’.⁴⁶

Calvin’s second line of reasoning came from the history of the church. He sharply disagreed that images were books for the uneducated, the reasoning adopted by Pope Gregory (I) in one of his circulated letters. In response to Gregory (as well as John of Damascus and Nicea II) Calvin cited Habakkuk 2:19, ‘What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, the molded images a teacher of lies ... Woe to him who says to wood, “Awake!” To silent stone, “Arise! It shall teach”’.⁴⁷ He much preferred the decree from the Council of Elvira which convened in Spain in 305 (also called Illiberitanum): ‘[From the Council of Elvira] it is decreed that there shall be no pictures in churches, that what is revered or adored be not depicted on the walls’.⁴⁸ Of course, Calvin’s case was not greatly bolstered by such a relatively unknown council. But Calvin also cited Augustine from the *City of God* as saying that the first men to introduce statues of the gods, ‘removed fear and added error’. Augustine is referring to a work

⁴⁵ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.8.17, p. 383. In *Calvini Opera Selecta*, the line beginning ‘Then he makes’ reads, ‘ac proinde ad legitimum sui cultum, hoc est spiritualem et a se insitutum, format’. Calvin continued this theme in his commentary on Exodus saying, ‘The sum is, that worship of God must be spiritual, in order that it may correspond with His nature’, see John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Volume II: A Harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), p. 107.

⁴⁶ See Chapter Five (5.III) for a discussion of a selection of Dowsing’s books and his annotations in them.

⁴⁷ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.5, p. 105.

⁴⁸ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.6, p. 106.

by Varro that is not extant. The fact that a pagan (Varro) first observed the dangers of images, says Calvin, should shame Christian theologians since they lacked the discernment of a pagan philosopher. Calvin concluded, ‘Whoever, therefore, desires to be rightly taught must learn what he should know of God from some other source than images’.⁴⁹

The writings of Martin Bucer and John Calvin were key components in the solidification of the iconoclastic rationale in England. By the time Dowsing cited ‘Calvin and his Institutions’ puritan cries to remove the dangers of popery and to preserve spiritual worship were at a fever pitch. Although the works of Bucer and Calvin added coherence and respectability to the iconoclastic cause in England, there was a figure closer to home who infused a certain amount of fire into the Reformed faith. The discussion now turns to the place of John Knox in the development of iconoclastic thought.

ii. John Knox’s contribution to iconoclastic thought

William Dowsing was slightly suspicious of ‘Scottish deventie’ as seen in one of his marginal notes in a sermon preached by Samuel Rutherford in 1643.⁵⁰ His doubts may have revealed more about the cultural divide between Scotland and England than a significant theological rift. Dowsing’s suspicions do not undermine the influence of Scottish piety on English Puritanism. The Scottish reformer John Knox (1505?-1572) was not only concerned with the Reformation in Scotland. Jane Dawson and Lionel Glassey contend that he considered the Protestant Reformation to be a ‘British, rather than a specifically Scottish phenomenon’.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.6, p. 106.

⁵⁰ Samuel Rutherford, *A Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons: At Their Late Solemne Fast, Wednesday, Janu. 31. 1643* (Printed at London: by Richard Cotes, for Richard Whittakers & Andrew Crooke, and are to bee sold at their Shops in Pauls Church-yard, 1644). In Dowsing’s collection see V.17.

⁵¹ Jane Dawson and Lionel K.J. Glassey, “Some Unpublished Letters from John Knox to Christopher Goodman,” *The Scottish Historical Review* LXXXIV, no. 218 (2005), p. 166.

Knox was certainly not a stranger to English controversy. His English friend Christopher Goodman convinced Knox to support the puritan position in the English vestments controversy. His concern for the progress of the Reformation in England is also discernable from several ‘godly letters’ he wrote to believers in London, Newcastle and England at large.⁵² One striking example of his dismay over English idolatry comes from *A Godly Letter to the Faithful in London* (1554):

[I]dolatry so incenses and kindles the wrath of God, that it is never quenched until the offenders, and all that they possess, be destroyed from the earth; for he commands for themselves to be stoned to the death ... This may appear a severe and rigorous judgement, but if ye shall consider the cause, God’s great mercy toward us shall be espied; for there into he declares himself enemy unto our enemies. For all those that would draw us from God (be they Kings or Queens), being of the Devil’s nature, are enemies unto God, and therefore will God that in such cases we declare ourselves enemies unto them.⁵³

This quote represents a controversial element of Knox’s encouragement to England. Knox argued throughout the letter that the godly had a right, even a duty, to overthrow a ruler who led them astray. Knox’s willingness to speak in such stark terms underscores a central argument of this chapter: that Reformers opposed idolatry in an effort to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints. Knox saw preservation of the Gospel as a much higher virtue than loyalty to a crown. In fact, Knox’s original manuscript of this letter contains the phrase, ‘prophets of God may sometimes teach treason against kings’. However, his language was overly strong and either Knox or his publisher removed it from the public version of the letter.⁵⁴ Puritans in the 1640s operated as though they were applying both Knox’s warning against the dangers of idolatry and

⁵² John Knox, *An Epistle to the Inhabitants of Newcastle and Berwick* (1558) and *A Brief Exhortation to England for the Speedy Embracing of the Gospel* (1559), *The Works of John Knox* (New York: AMS, 1966), vol. V, pp. 469-522.

⁵³ John Knox, *A Godly Letter to the Faithful in London*, *The Works of John Knox*, vol. III, p. 193. Knox wrote this letter whilst living on the continent after leaving England upon the death of Edward VI. When Edward died Knox was residing and preaching in Buckinghamshire, England. It was first published in 1554 with the stamp ‘From Wittenboure’. See *The Works of John Knox*, vol. III, p.159.

⁵⁴ Jasper Ridley, *John Knox* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.177.

his call to remove a recalcitrant ruler. Jasper Ridley agreed, ‘The revolutionary political philosophy of the English Puritans was derived from Knox’.⁵⁵

Knox added to his call for English repentance in an *Epistle to the Inhabitants of Newcastle and Berwick* (1558). He saw England as a place once richly blessed of God that had turned from God toward gross idolatry. It was in England that ‘God hath erected his sanctuarie, builded his temple, and chosen his habitation and dwelling-place’.⁵⁶ According to Knox, since England received so many of the ‘blessings of God’ England would pay dearly for her idolatry. In the *Epistle* Knox also lamented that his ‘former ministrations’ did not have the effect in England that he had hoped. However, the weight of his arguments would have more of an impact than he imagined.⁵⁷ Knox’s articulation of the Reformed faith in the *Scots Confession of 1560* would later help to shape the Westminster Standards of 1646.⁵⁸ Knox’s writings portrayed a commitment to the full application of the Reformed faith in Scotland, England, and Ireland.⁵⁹ Part of a total application included a strict adherence to the second commandment as one of God’s rules for worship. In that way, the ‘regulative principle’ of worship has its roots in the writings and sermons of John Knox.

Knox and Calvin were contemporaries in the sixteenth century reform effort. In a letter written from Calvin to Knox on 8 November 1559, Calvin reported that he was fully aware of Knox’s successes in reforming the church in Scotland and he wondered at ‘success so incredible

⁵⁵ Ridley, *John Knox*, p. 529. Ridley also argued that many seventeenth-century puritans thought more like Anabaptists (in relation to government) than like Knox’s Presbyterians. The basis for this statement is unclear, but his contention that puritans of the 1640s were not identical to Knox’s Presbyterians is accurate.

⁵⁶ Knox, *Epistle to the Inhabitants of Newcastle and Berwick*, p. 489.

⁵⁷ Knox, *Epistle to the Inhabitants of Newcastle and Berwick*, p. 472.

⁵⁸ The Scottish confession was technically drafted by ‘The Six Johns’: John Winram, John Spottiswoode, John Willock, John Douglas, John Row and John Knox. However, it is believed to be largely the work of John Knox.

⁵⁹ Dawson and Glassey, “Some Unpublished Letters,” p. 166. Knox’s concern for Ireland is revealed in his desire to conduct a mission to Ireland with Goodman in 1566.

in so short a time'.⁶⁰ Knox had previously written to Calvin asking if the 'children of idolaters' should be admitted to Baptism. Calvin replied to say that after consulting with the brethren in Geneva, it was decided that these children were not to be baptised until their parents 'testified their repentance'.⁶¹ Calvin's reply shows the depth of the issue of religious images in both Geneva and Scotland. The consensus among the Reformed was that the church must not give even tacit approval to believers worshipping God in a way that was contrary to Scripture.

Knox and Calvin shared the belief that the Word of God should govern the church's worship of God. A brief comparison of public statements will demonstrate the similarity of their positions. In Knox's first public debate with Catholic authorities in 1547 he argued:

Now, if you will prove that your ceremonies proceed from faith, and do please God, you must prove that God in expressed words has commanded them; or else you shall never prove that they proceed from faith, nor yet that they please God; but that they are sin, and do displease him, according to the words of the apostle, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin".⁶²

Knox mounted his statements on the same thesis that Calvin argued before Charles V in 1544:

I know how difficult it is to persuade the world that God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by his word ... But since God not only counts as fruitless, but also plainly abominates, whatever we undertake from zeal to his worship, if at variance with his command, what do we gain by a contrary course? The words of God are clear and distinct, "Obedience is better than sacrifice." "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (1 Sam. xv. 22; Matth. xv. 9). Every addition to his word, especially in this matter, is a lie. Mere 'will worship' (εθελοθησχεία) is vanity. This is the decision, and when once the judge has decided, it is no longer time for debate.⁶³

Both statements bear a similarity to a section from the Westminster Confession of 1646:

But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the

⁶⁰ John Calvin, "Letter from Calvin to Knox," *The Works of John Knox*, vol. 6, p. 95.

⁶¹ Calvin, "Letter from Calvin to Knox," *The Works of John Knox*, p. 95.

⁶² Knox, *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*, *The Works of John Knox*, vol. 1, pp. 195-196

⁶³ Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, pp. 128-129.

imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.⁶⁴

Although the passage from the Westminster Confession would come to be known as the ‘regulative principle’, it seems clear that the essence of the principle was articulated in the thought of Calvin and Knox, even if historical circumstances prevented a full application of the principle in their day. After all, Calvin did make the political concession that ‘certain things though not positively approved must be tolerated’.⁶⁵ Knox seemed less encumbered by political pressure. However, the convictions of Knox and Calvin reflected in the Westminster Confession helped to solidify the place of the regulative principle in the iconoclastic rationale.

The iconoclastic ordinance that set William Dowsing in motion in 1643 already embodied this principle. The ordinance, and three years later the Westminster Confession, codified the puritan ideal for worship in England. The ideal was shaped historically in the thought of reformers like Bucer, Calvin and Knox. William Dowsing was part of the force employed by the Long Parliament to move English churches toward the ‘regulative’ ideal conceived by many second generation reformers.

iii. Peter Ramus, William Perkins and the ‘puritan mind’

William Perkins (1558-1602) represented an important chronological and geographical bridge for iconoclastic thought in England. Perkins’ contribution to puritan Reformed thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was extensive. Therefore, he occupies a crucial place in the theological and historical journey from Calvin to Dowsing. Much of Perkins’ approach to

⁶⁴ See *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXI, section I at <http://www.reformed.org/documents> (accessed 8 May 2008).

⁶⁵ This quotation is attributed to Calvin in Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 72. It actually comes from a letter from Calvin to Knox dated 23 April 1561, found in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. 6, Letter LVI, p. 123.

theology grew out of his appreciation for the French Protestant, logician and mathematician Peter Ramus (1515-1572). Ramus, who was also a contemporary of Calvin and Knox, had his greatest influence in the reform of education and logic in the sixteenth century. Ramus, and 'Ramists' after him, called for a simplification of logic that reduced Aristotelian 'categories' into simpler 'arguments' or 'concepts'. Ramus and his collaborator Omer Talon were controversial figures in the sixteenth century. Ramus' attack on Aristotle made him the target of established academics as his *Dialectica* sought to replace much of the 'complex' scholastic logic of the Middle Ages with a simplified system of 'dichotomization'.⁶⁶ According to Walter Ong, Ramist method was very attractive to 'the bourgeois mind'.⁶⁷ The element of simplification led to a pervasive criticism that Ramus had streamlined matters that were inherently complex.

Despite his controversial reordering of logic and rhetoric, or perhaps because of it, his works were tremendously popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were over 1,100 printings of individual works by Ramus between 1550 and 1650.⁶⁸ The works relied heavily on axioms, 'statements that are seen as true on sight with no need for further clarifications'.⁶⁹ As English Reformed writers began to adopt Ramist method, concepts were stated plainly in a series of dialectics: elect and reprobate, wisdom and folly, orthodoxy and heresy. In the 1930s Perry Miller established that 'Ramism' had a remarkable influence on English and American Puritanism. Miller argued that 'puritan theology' was really the

⁶⁶ Walter J. Ong, "Ramus, Peter," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 67. Ramus did not mince words in his disapproval of Aristotle. His master's thesis at the University of Paris was entitled, "Quaecumque ab Aristotle Dicta Essent, Commentitia Esse" ("Whatever Aristotle has Said is a Fabrication").

⁶⁷ Ong, "Ramus, Peter," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7.

⁶⁸ McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*, p. 1.

⁶⁹ Donald K. McKim, "The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* XVI, no. 4 (1985), p. 506.

outgrowth of Ramist logic, joined with the theology of Augustine and Calvin.⁷⁰ Essentially, Ramist thought helped to communicate Reformed theology by making it easily accessible to preachers and laity alike. When Reformed theologians processed doctrines through Ramist logic, the result was a clearly defined body of truths, complete with corresponding falsehoods. This development helped to reinforce the iconoclastic rationale in the Reformed community. Reformed and Catholic systems of worship became polar opposites, each on opposing sides of Ramist ‘charts’.

It would be a mistake to overstate the role of Ramism in the development of Reformed theology. Linking Calvinists too closely to a certain method could provoke another ill-advised ‘central interpretive motif’ or central dogma. After all, no less than Calvin’s successor in Geneva, Theodore Beza, was an adamant opponent of Ramist method and philosophy.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the affinity for Ramist method in English Puritanism is difficult to deny. As Richard Muller has rightly asserted, ‘if not universally accepted – indeed, opposed bitterly by Beza and [Caspar] Olevianus – Ramism is characteristic of the striving of early orthodoxy toward a careful and viable enunciation of theological method’.⁷²

Perkins, a Cambridge puritan, was an early practitioner of a Calvinism mobilised, in part, by Ramist method. He was arguably the ‘most widely known theologian of the Elizabethan church ... [replacing] Calvin and Beza near the top of the English best-seller list’.⁷³ Owing to his prolific writing and winsome preaching, Lori Anne Ferrell deduced that ‘English Calvinism

⁷⁰ This idea is the underlying thesis in Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954). See also McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins’ Theology*, p. xiii. Ramus’ importance was also asserted by linguist Walter J. Ong in Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958).

⁷¹ *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 52.

⁷² Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, p. 62.

⁷³ William Perkins, *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), p. xi.

owes its success to William Perkins'.⁷⁴ Indeed, in Dowsing's collection of parliamentary sermons Thomas Hill remarked, 'How many living stones, yea how many Builders did famous Perkins hew, by preaching a lecture in Cambridge? Many children and fathers begotten by his Ministry in a few years, to the great advancement of the truth'.⁷⁵ But before he reached that status, the young William Perkins was tutored by the moderate puritan Laurence Chaderton. Chaderton was an advocate of Ramist method when Perkins enrolled in the puritan stronghold of Christ's College, Cambridge in 1577. His connections to Chaderton and Cambridge were life-long. Although Christ's College maintained a strong affinity for Aristotelian 'categories' and method, Perkins' early Ramist tutelage emerged in *A Golden Chaine*.⁷⁶ This work set the course of the 'elect' against the course of the 'reprobate' in quintessential Ramist fashion. Perkins summarized the path of each with a now famous Ramist chart.

In 1584 Perkins stood for election as a Fellow of Christ's College. Once elected, Perkins and his puritan colleagues soon entered into conflict with University authorities after Perkins publically addressed the college saying, 'in things indifferent we must go as far as we can from idolatry'. He was addressing the immediate issue of whether or not believers should kneel when taking the Lord's Supper, but his comments seemed to apply to the general state of worship in England. Ian Breward argued that Perkins drew his position straight from Bucer and Calvin, which associated him with a more radical type of Elizabethan puritan. The University charged Perkins over the disruption caused by his sermon. However, due to his sense of submission to

⁷⁴ Ferrell, "Transfiguring Theology: William Perkins and Calvinist Aesthetics," *John Foxe and His World*, p. 167.

⁷⁵ Thomas Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced. In a Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Solemne Fast, Iuly 27. 1642. By Thomas Hill, B.D. Pastor of the Church at Tychmersh in the Countie of Northampton. Published by Order of That House* (London: Printed by I. L. for Iohn Bellamie, Philemon Stephens, and Ralph Smith, 1642). See William Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons, IV.21.51.

⁷⁶ Ian Breward, "Introduction," *The Work of William Perkins*, pp. 3-4.

‘God-ordained’ authorities Perkins was able to clear himself of all charges.⁷⁷ This incident revealed a tension in Perkins’ thought between his allegiance to many of the ideals expressed by Bucer and Calvin and his duty to submit to those in authority over him.⁷⁸

That was not the only tension present in Perkins’ thought. He not only repudiated the use of images in the church, he also opposed images of the mind. However, he preached in a way that encouraged hearers to ponder specific images. For example in *A Faithful and Plain Exposition upon Zephaniah 2.1-2* (1593), Perkins used the extended illustration of a narrow ‘bridge of life’ and ‘damnation the stream which runneth under it’.⁷⁹ It seems that Perkins was quite comfortable employing mental imagery in the context of a sermon, but did not encourage it as a matter of personal piety. He also used Ramist charts to present theological concepts in a highly visual way. According to Ferrell, these charts amounted to ‘ocular catechisms’ which allowed ‘highly educated clergymen, well-educated laypeople and – most intriguingly – less educated, hard working, pedagogical collaborators’ to absorb Reformed thought.⁸⁰ How did Perkins resolve the tension between internal/external images and the visual accessibility of Ramist charts? Susan Hardman Moore answered, ‘The resolution, for Perkins, lay in keeping mental imaging within the bounds set by the language and imagery of scripture’.⁸¹ In other words, Perkins advocated an early form of ‘mind-mapping’ which placed concepts in a particular mental space without using an animated image.⁸²

⁷⁷ Breward, “Introduction,” *The Work of William Perkins*, p. 5.

⁷⁸ Breward, “Introduction,” *The Work of William Perkins*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁹ William Perkins, *A Faithful and Plain Exposition upon Zephaniah 2.1-2*, *The Work of William Perkins*, pp. 284-285.

⁸⁰ Ferrell, “Transfiguring Theology: William Perkins and Calvinist Aesthetics,” pp. 167, 177.

⁸¹ Hardman Moore, “For the Mind’s Eye Only,” p. 291. See also Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, p. 147.

⁸² Hardman Moore, “For the Mind’s Eye Only,” p. 291.

Perkins explained his approach to imagination, meditation and ‘images’ in *A Treatise on Man’s Imagination*.⁸³ Dyrness summarized the essence of Perkins’ thought on images: ‘Visible images ... kindle corrupt affections, and thus by dulling wit and memory, actually impede the proper development of spiritual imagination’.⁸⁴ Perkins was a pastor at heart and had obvious concerns for the piety of the laity. More to the point, Perkins was concerned that religious images would hinder the laity from properly growing in the ‘faith delivered once to the saints’. The church should not promote images as a ‘crutch’, but should encourage that which makes a crutch no longer necessary: biblical preaching and spiritual meditation. Perkins wrote in *A Reformed Catholic* (1597):

The right images of the New Testament which we hold and acknowledge are the doctrine and preaching of the Gospel and all things that by the Word of God pertain thereto ... The preaching of the word is a most excellent picture in which Christ with his benefits are lively represented unto us.⁸⁵

The Moral Law of the Ten Commandments was an ever-present factor in Perkins’ thought. He, like Calvin, ‘maintained and furthered a positive emphasis on the [moral] law’ in the life of the Christian.⁸⁶ Therefore, the second commandment was an indispensable guide for growth in Christian piety. In 1601 Perkins specifically addressed the second commandment and the issue of images in worship with *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times*. The Epistle Dedicatory revealed Perkins’ concern for the safety of the true Gospel in England. According to Perkins, popish religion had placed the Gospel in peril and invited the judgement of God. The land that had once enjoyed the blessing of God’s presence now faced the possibility

⁸³ William Perkins, *A Treatise of Mans Imaginations Shewing His Naturall Evill Thoughts: His Want of Good Thoughts: The Way to Reforme Them. Framed and Preached by M. Wil. Perkins* (Printed by Iohn Legat, 1607).

⁸⁴ Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, p. 147.

⁸⁵ Quoted in James C. Herbert, “William Perkins’ ‘A Reformed Catholic’: A Psycho-Cultural Interpretation,” *Church History* 51, no. 1 (1982), p. 15. Herbert cited from the 1598 edition of *A Reformed Catholic*.

⁸⁶ Donald K. McKim, “William Perkins and the Christian Life: The Place of the Moral Law and Sanctification in Perkins’ Theology,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (1987), p. 134.

‘that God should take away his Gospel from us, and give it to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof’.⁸⁷ Perkins set forth the iconoclastic rationale in a way that was clear and unmistakeable. He began the treatise by plainly showing the reader his intentions: 1) to convince the church of Rome of her ‘manifest idolatries’; 2) to convince English men and women of the folly of popish worship; 3) to stir up a detestation of ‘Romish religion’; 4) to inform the ‘ignorant multitude’ of the ‘true worship of God’. A Ramist like Perkins was able to present these thoroughgoing arguments using a method which left virtually no middle position.

Perkins thoroughly rebuffed the five core ‘excuses’ for the use of images in the church. That Perkins had ‘arguments’ and papists had ‘excuses’ was a subtle indication of how certain Perkins was of his position. First, many argued that they worshipped using ‘images’ not ‘idols’. Perkins responded by asserting that a forbidden item used for worship is inherently idolatrous because it was forbidden. Since images were forbidden by the second commandment, there was no difference between image and idol. A second argument in favour of images was that images themselves were not worshipped, but God through them. Perkins replied, ‘that worship only pleaseth God which he himself hath directly prescribed in his word’.⁸⁸ Perkins’ reply sounded similar to that of Calvin, that obedience to God’s word was better than a sacrifice of human invention. The third excuse that Perkins countered amounted to the *dulia*/*latria* distinction. Again, Perkins resembled Calvin: ‘it is absurd to think that a distinction of terms, should make the proper worship of God to be the worship of the creature. The devil required no more of Christ than *dulia*, service’.⁸⁹ The fourth ‘error’ in view for Perkins was the citation of miracles as proofs for the power of images. His answer was anti-papery personified: ‘the scripture saith

⁸⁷ William Perkins, *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times. And an Instruction Touching Religious, or Divine Worship* (Printed by Iohn Legat, Printer to the Universitie of Cambridge, 1601), Epistle Dedicatory.

⁸⁸ Perkins, *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times*, p. 115.

⁸⁹ Perkins, *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times*, pp. 115-116.

plainly that the coming of Antichrist, who in all likelihood is the Bishop of Rome, shall be in miracles and lying wonders'.⁹⁰ Plainly stated, he argued that miracles associated with images may well confirm their connection to Antichrist. The fifth, and final, 'excuse' for images claimed that the images forbidden in Scripture were those used to worship foreign gods, not the images used in the 'Catholic' system of worship. Perkins responded with a terse retort, 'Like is the folly of both in the making of their gods'. Thus, in this work, he succeeded in placing the 'Romish' system of worship in diametrical opposition to the 'puritan' concept of worship. In the nineteenth century Rudyard Kipling would describe the division between Britain and India by writing, 'East is East, West is West and never the twain shall meet'.⁹¹ Perkins' application of Ramist method exposed a similar gulf between Catholic and puritan worship.

Perkins made great strides in the campaign to create a clear dividing line between the Catholic Church and the true Church. In *A Reformed Catholic* (1597), Perkins showed that a 'Reformed Catholic' and a 'Roman Catholic' could never be fully reconciled because, among other reasons, they had a completely different understanding of the place of images in worship.⁹² Perkins' influential position at Cambridge helped to move English Christians toward a perspective that not only repudiated the Roman Catholic Church, but all things which resembled 'popery'. As the second part of this chapter will show, Archbishop William Laud drew ire from English puritans in the 1630s because he crossed a line drawn so clearly by Perkins and others.

Margaret Aston has also rightly demonstrated Perkins' attempt to free the thoughts of the laity from 'idols of the mind' as another protection against popery.⁹³ Perkins warned,

⁹⁰ Perkins, *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times*, pp. 120-121.

⁹¹ Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West," *Barrack-Room Ballads and other Verses* (Middlesex: Echo Library, 2008), pp. 39-42.

⁹² Herbert, "William Perkins' *A Reformed Catholic*," pp. 9ff. Another chief reason cited by Perkins was the Roman Catholic perspective on the Lord's presence in the Eucharist.

⁹³ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 453.

The right way to conceive God, is not to conceive any form, but to conceive in mind his properties and proper effects. So soon as the mind frames unto itself any form of God (as he is popishly conceived to be like an old man sitting in heaven in a throne with a sceptre in his hand) an idol is set up in the mind.⁹⁴

This 'functional' view of God helped later generations to worship God in his holiness (property) and for his work (effect) without confining him to a specific form.

Perkins also influenced later generations of puritans through the development of a system of biblical application, or casuistry. He believed Christians could employ an automatic scriptural response to settle individual 'cases of conscience'. As Donald McKim described Perkins' method of application, 'Perkins dichotomized application into mental and practical'. But those categories had subcategories. 'Mentall was further divided into doctrine for the information of the mind and teaching for the reformation of the mind while Practicall was bifurcated into instruction and correction.'⁹⁵ Therefore, an individual 'case of conscience' could be assigned a specific realm and then appropriate verses of scripture were applied. The greatest 'case of conscience' was the issue of one's status as elect or reprobate. *A Golden Chaine* (1591) was a meticulous discussion of how a troubled soul could find assurance of its election by God. Muller considered *A Golden Chaine* to be a bridge between 'systematic theology and moral casuistry. It is the greatest "case of conscience". Doctrines are treated only as they relate to the problem of assurance'.⁹⁶ Thus, Perkins used Ramist method to make this crucial issue as clear as possible for those 'stricken in their conscience'.

McKim argued that Perkins' preference for clarity and piety travelled through his books and students to future generations of English puritans:

⁹⁴ Perkins, *Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last times*, quoted in Aston, p. 453 and in Tessa Watt *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p. 136.

⁹⁵ McKim, "The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology," p. 511.

⁹⁶ Richard A. Muller, "A Golden Chaine: Predestinarian System or Schematized Ordo Salutis," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, no. 1 (1978), pp. 80-81.

Perkins' influence in succeeding generations came through his published works. But his initial legacy was through a line of students who followed his theological concerns and in whose works the influence of Ramus as mediated by Perkins can be seen. Among these Cambridge University Ramists a line of student-teacher relationships can be drawn from Perkins to John Milton.⁹⁷

The student-teacher relationships were: Perkins taught William Ames; Ames tutored William Chappel; Chappel was the tutor of John Milton. The crucial point is that Perkins affected the state of Reformed Orthodoxy long after his death in 1602.

The two elements of Perkins' thought that were vital to the iconoclastic rationale among puritans were his content and his method. By way of content he brought Scripture to bear on 'popish religion', providing voluminous material for preachers and laity to use in their resistance of idolatry. He also stressed the idea that, for the Christian, 'right belief' demanded 'right action'.⁹⁸ It could be argued that William Dowsing demolished images in churches and chapels because a 'right belief' (the second commandment) meant he was morally obliged to carry out the 'right action' (iconoclasm).

From a methodological perspective, Perkins precipitated the puritan tendency to couch theological matters in 'black and white' language. His style of preaching also had a tremendous effect on the 'plain style' adopted by so many puritans after him. Essentially, in plain style preaching

the sermon proceeded according to the order of the text to give Doctrines, Uses, Objections and Answers, marked as such in the margin, with no attempt at the formal symmetry of the classical scheme ... 'Reasons' explicated the doctrines and [then] 'uses' or 'applications' were made to show the specific contemporary significance of the doctrines.⁹⁹

In his landmark work *The Art of Prophecy* (Latin 1592, English 1606), Perkins set forth an approach to preaching based on a series of 'doctrines' and 'uses', the approach to preaching that

⁹⁷ McKim, "The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology," p. 506.

⁹⁸ McKim, "William Perkins and the Christian Life," p. 136.

⁹⁹ McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*, p. 126.

is clearly evident in William Dowsing's six-volume collection of parliamentary fast sermons.¹⁰⁰

One further evidence that puritans preferred the 'plain style' of preaching lies in the *Directorie of Publique Worship of God* adopted by the Westminster Assembly in 1644. In that document the Westminster divines effectively 'codified the method'.¹⁰¹

Perkins' authoritative voice travelled indirectly to Dowsing through the sermons Dowsing read. But his influence also travelled directly to Suffolk a generation after Perkins' death. In Dowsing's letter to Matthew Newcomen, Dowsing mentions a work by a 'Mr. Perkins' which was in circulation there. This supports Hugh Trevor-Roper's argument that 'thirty years after [Perkins'] death, William Laud's visitors found Perkins' books commoner than the prayer book in Puritan districts'.¹⁰² Dowsing's Suffolk was among the 'puritan' districts Trevor-Roper indicated.

III. Laudian Deeds as Catalysts for Dowsing's campaign

Trevor-Roper's mention of Archbishop William Laud serves as a transition to the next part of this chapter. Not only were there theological developments that helped to solidify the iconoclastic rationale among puritans, but there were also historical/cultural changes that added intensity to the debate. Reformed Orthodoxy met a formidable challenge during the reign of Charles I. However, opposition helped to strengthen convictions within the puritan movement. For these Reformed 'saints', the ecclesiastical policies of Charles I and Archbishop Laud created a corporate case of conscience for which iconoclasm was part of the prescribed remedy.

¹⁰⁰ Chapter Five of this study examines Dowsing's notes and the evidence of 'plain style' preaching in Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons.

¹⁰¹ McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*, p. 126.

¹⁰² Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573-1645* (London: Macmillan, 1940), p. 80.

The present study opened with Dowsing's visit to Linstead Parva because the small church, situated at a secluded crossroads, was actually a microcosm of much larger debates in Civil War England. Dowsing's targets in the minute building were remnants of pre-Reformation 'superstition' as well as Laudian innovations of the 1630s.¹⁰³ In that way, Linstead Parva reflected many of Charles I's ecclesiastical policies in the 1630s that spurred puritans like Dowsing toward action in the 1640s. When Dowsing entered the grounds of Linstead Parva he was not simply seeking to redecorate the building, but to help repudiate the policies that resulted in so many 'monuments of superstition'. Like the small parish church, England was also at a crossroads. Reform-minded puritans in Parliament faced the challenge of reversing policies that had gained momentum since the ascension of Charles I in 1625.

Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign was one physical manifestation of a long-standing philosophical tension in England. What made the philosophical divide particularly problematic for many puritans was that the leader of the opposition was their king. Prince Charles' ill-fated attempt to win the Infanta of Spain in 1623 placed the future king on a collision course with the godly. Charles' infatuation with the Spanish princess and the ceremonies of the Catholic Church in Spain meant that puritans looked at Charles with suspicion even before he came to the throne. After the embarrassing rejection from the Infanta, Charles steeled himself to find a bride who would reinvigorate Stuart honour. His choice did nothing to improve his reputation among puritans. After his coronation in 1625, Charles was engaged to wed Princess Henrietta Maria of France. Part of the engagement included a promise from Charles allowing the princess free exercise of her Catholic faith, along with a promise of some toleration of Catholicism in England. The timing of the match was dangerous as well. It meant that Charles had seemingly

¹⁰³ Trevor Cooper, "Dowsing at Cambridge University," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 55.

allied himself with Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu, just as they were attacking the rights of Protestant Huguenots in France. In short, Charles had not endeared himself to puritan parliamentarians or clergy.¹⁰⁴

The perceived alliance with France was undermined by persistent conflict between 1625 and 1629. Kevin Sharpe argued that the chief reason for dissolving Parliament in 1629 was Charles' frustration with its 'refusal' to fund English troops for battle. By 1629 Charles was at war with 'two of the mightiest nations in Europe' (France and Spain) and Charles felt that 'parliamentarians failed to meet their responsibility and so undermined his capacity to fulfil his royal obligation to protect the realm'.¹⁰⁵ When Parliament essentially suggested a tax-payer strike in order to pressure the king to change his policies, the king had been pushed too far. With such obvious manipulation, Charles needed to shore up both the war effort and the king's prerogative. As Conrad Russell surmised, 'The Parliament of 1629 brought about its own destruction'.¹⁰⁶ Thus in 1629, Charles disbanded the third Parliament of his reign under the justification that wars are better won by king than committee. He would not call another Parliament until 1640, a session that would catapult England into civil war. Even if troop subsidies were an important factor in dissolving Parliament in 1629, the king's ecclesiastical policies during the 'Personal Rule' (1629-1640) led puritans to believe that he had a hidden agenda from the beginning. As L.J. Reeve has argued, Charles' repeated attempts to make peace with Catholic Spain and the rise of crown-approved Laudianism 'could only appear sinister to English Calvinists'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁵ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁰⁶ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 416.

¹⁰⁷ L.J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule*, ed. J. S. Morrill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 71.

The puritan opinion of Charles plummeted when Laud became central to the king's ecclesiastical agenda in the 1630s. Reeve summarized the period well: 'The transformation which began to come over the appearance of the English Church during the late 1620s was essentially the work of two men: Laud and the king'.¹⁰⁸ However, it was more than the appearance of the English Church that was changing. Laud's coup against the Reformed was as much theological as it was aesthetic. Since Laud and the king became symbols for a regression to the perils of popery, it is little wonder that the two did not survive the theological and military revolt of the 1640s. When Laud came to the archbishopric, the conditions that would occasion Dowsing's campaign were already taking shape.

Laud's anti-Calvinist crusade expressed a pervasive distrust of puritans in the English church. Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke point out that Edward VI's reign was an early cause of anti-Calvinist sentiment. The Edwardian Reformation was the first time that altars and images were removed as 'a matter of government policy'.¹⁰⁹ Edward VI's sweeping application of Reformation principles gave rise to an increasing anti-Calvinist faction in the English church. Fincham and Tyacke also concur with Diarmaid McCulloch's identification of a 'Westminster Movement' led by Gabriel Goodman, who led Westminster Abbey from 1561-1601. The 'Westminster Movement' was a group of like-minded clergy who sought to repudiate the Edwardian Reformation.¹¹⁰ Julie Merritt agreed, calling the abbey at this time 'the cradle of Laudianism'.¹¹¹ Much later, and with the king's approval, Laud was able to give an authoritative voice to anti-Calvinist sentiments in the 1630s.

¹⁰⁸ Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, preface.

¹¹⁰ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 82. The authors are citing Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), pp. 208-213.

¹¹¹ See J.F. Merritt in "The Cradle of Laudianism," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2001), pp. 627-629. See also, J.F. Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians, and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London," *The Historical Journal* 41, no. 4 (1998), p. 935. Merritt argued that the pre-Laudian attitude toward church

Long before the 1630s, there were a number of sixteenth-century attempts to undermine the Reformed presence in England. In 1564 the Catholic John Maritall put forth a public defence of religious images. When Alexander Nowell tried to counter Maritall's arguments before the Queen at Whitehall, his attack on images became so vehement that he was publically reprimanded by Elizabeth and 'forced to cut short his sermon – this providing further grist to the Catholic propaganda mill'.¹¹² Anti-Reformed attitudes steadily increased toward the end of the sixteenth century. Fincham and Tyacke asserted,

The 1590s are recognized as a pivotal decade in the history of the English Church, when Reformed or Calvinist hegemony in doctrine came under open attack and a novel sacrament-centered style of piety began – the latter most obviously in the writings of Richard Hooker.¹¹³

Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594) helped to encourage the rebuilding and beautification of English churches, a movement which was to 'gather pace in the reign of James I'. Fincham and Tyacke have argued that many seventeenth-century attacks on Reformed worship were largely a carry-over from the implied views of Elizabeth.¹¹⁴

Near the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a growing group of clergy dedicated to ceremonial worship who openly questioned 'what passed for doctrinal orthodoxy'. The group's clout grew when the leading figure in the movement, Lancelot Andrewes, accepted

beautification was more complex than previously realized. She noted that Laud capitalized on a growing movement toward the beautification of churches that began under James I, but also maintained that Laud's contribution was extreme.

¹¹² Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 77.

¹¹³ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, pp. 74-75.

¹¹⁴ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 89. See also, Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism C.1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 29. There were examples of 'Arminian' resistance to Puritanism at Cambridge, aimed specifically at the writings of William Perkins. Controversy escalated shortly after the publication of Perkins' *A Golden Chaine* in 1591. Nicholas Tyacke wrote: 'While immensely popular, [*A Golden Chaine*] also served to increase Arminian opposition at Cambridge.' In 1595 a sermon given by William Barrett, the chaplain of Gonville and Caius College, took umbrage with Perkins' supralapsarianism. In short, Barrett took Perkins and the Cambridge puritans to task over the doctrine of unconditional election. Cambridge authorities brought Barrett before them and he was forced to recant. However, this skirmish anticipated a more formidable anti-Calvinist campaign in the Church of England.

an appointment as Dean of Westminster in 1601.¹¹⁵ Anti-Calvinist momentum grew in the latter days of James I. There were two factors that seemed to encourage anti-Calvinist zeal in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. The first was in 1617 when James I called for widespread ‘improvements’ in the churches of England. The second came in 1620 with the proposed (massive) restoration of St Paul’s Cathedral. For anti-Calvinists these events represented an eminent triumph of their views on worship. For many puritans, such restorations invited idolatry and were inherently dangerous. The Reformation ideal that the Bible should determine the nature of worship appeared to be diminishing in England. It became clear that a conflict of ideas was unavoidable.

Charles I acted quickly after ascending the throne. According to Reeve, ‘by 1626 ... Calvinist predestinarian doctrine was outlawed, Laud was promised the see of Canterbury ... and ecclesiastical preferment was now open only to those of their persuasion’.¹¹⁶ But the question remained: how could Charles bring this great shift in ecclesiastical policy to pass? The English archbishoprics were distinctly Calvinist until the year 1628. The death of Archbishop Tobias Matthew in that year made way for the appointment of three successive Arminians: Montaigne (1628), Harsnett (1628-31) and Neile (1632-1640).¹¹⁷ Whatever the primary reason, Charles dissolved Parliament in 1629 and sided overtly with ‘a clerical group prepared to preach up monarchical authority in defence of its beliefs’. During these years the anti-Calvinist faction began to gain both influence and recruits. Such an atmosphere provided the perfect scene for Laud’s entrance. Archbishop Abbot’s death in 1633 left the seat at Canterbury vacant and, as

¹¹⁵ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 74.

¹¹⁶ Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule*, p. 26. Laud was appointed dean of the chapel royal in 1626, obviously decorating it in a style that pleased the king. Their sensibilities were harmonious and Charles felt confident that Laud would implement policies that met their shared standards. See Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 231.

¹¹⁷ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 181.

promised, William Laud filled it. Enjoying the full support of the Crown, Laude and Neile (then Archbishop of York) would work to establish the churches in the ‘beauty of holiness’.¹¹⁸

Laud and Neile made the most of an opportunity that arose in February 1633. The puritan Henry Sherfield stood trial in the Star Chamber in that year, for destroying an ‘idolatrous’ stained glass image of God the Father, ‘depicted as an old man’. Laud and Neile pounced on the moment to speak ‘much on behalf of images’.¹¹⁹ A year later Laud’s ‘visitation articles’ (a guide for investigating the practices of English Churches) included the question ‘whether have any ancient monuments or glasse windowes beene defaced’.¹²⁰ This question was also prominent in the visitation articles of Matthew Wren (1635) and Richard Montagu (1638), both Laudians.¹²¹ As the Laudian control on the church tightened, puritan opposition began to mount.

The disparity between the concepts of ‘Laudian worship’ and ‘puritan worship’ was vast. In 1637 the puritans John Bastwick, Henry Burton and William Prynne formally accused Laud of introducing idolatrous innovation into the Church of England. In the unwelcoming climate of the 1630s, their accusations backfired and resulted in a censure for all three accusers. At the public censure in the Star Chamber, Laud laid out his answers to the charges of innovation before the king. One section of the speech captured the difference between the puritan ‘regulative principle’ and Laud’s desire to create ‘beauty in worship’. Laud said,

The Altar is the greatest place of God’s residence upon the earth. I say the greatest, yea greater than the Pulpit. For there ‘tis Hoc est Corpus meum, This is my Body. But in the Pulpit, tis at most, but; Hoc est Verbum meum, This is my Word. And a greater reverence is due the Body, then to the Word of our Lord.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 181.

¹¹⁹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, pp. 141-142, quoting John Southcot, a Catholic observer.

¹²⁰ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 142.

¹²¹ Matthew Wren, *Articles to Be Inquired of within the Dioces of Norwich in the First Visitation of the R. Reverend Father in God, Matthew, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (Printed at London: By Richard Badger, 1636).

¹²² William Laud, *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971), p. 47.

In other words, Laud saw his ‘improvements’ as efforts to better reverence the body of the Lord in more suitable surroundings. The condition of the Lord’s Table in Reformed churches had regularly been a point of criticism from those who favoured a more ceremonial approach to worship. In fact, in the 1580s Lancelot Andrewes said that the table in Reformed churches ‘looks more like an oyster board ... than a table fit for God’s sanctuary’.¹²³ The problem, according to puritans, was that Laud sought to honour ‘the body of the Lord’ in ways that were strictly forbidden in ‘the Word of the Lord’. Laud’s central defence was that he was simply upholding ‘the external worship of God’ long celebrated in the church.¹²⁴

Laud also levelled charges of innovation at the puritans: ‘no men, in any age of [the Church] have been more guilty of innovation than they, while themselves cry out against it: Quis tulerit Gracchos?’¹²⁵ Here, Laud referred to the Reformation-era removal of images and altars as innovation. The Archbishop then evoked a memory from church history saying that Prynne and his followers were operating in the tradition of Novatian, a third century Roman who criticized Pope Cornelius over his leniency toward those who had recanted under the Decian persecution. Laud’s allusion was unfortunate, however. He likened his assailants to a theologian who opposed the pope, a character with whom his detractors would gladly link Laud. However, Laud was employing the more general reference to Novatian as the leader of a schismatic arm of the early church. The point was to link his opponents with subversion and sedition.¹²⁶ After he felt he had removed the cloud of ‘innovation’ from himself he ended by rhetorically turning to his

¹²³ Quoted in Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 85.

¹²⁴ Laud, *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church*, p. 4. See also Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, pp. 58-59.

¹²⁵ Laud, *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church*, p. 5. An allusion to Juvenal’s satire *Moralists without Morals* (II, 24); The full line from the satire reads ‘who could endure the Gracchi railing at sedition?’ (full text available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/juv-sat2eng.html>). The message of the idiom amounts to ‘Do you hear them denouncing what they themselves do?’

¹²⁶ Laud, *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church*, p. 6.

puritan accusers saying, 'let them take it off as they can'.¹²⁷ Although it appeared at the censuring of Bastwick, Burton and Prynne in 1637 that Laud had successfully fought back against his opponents, there would be a long series of battles before the end of the war.

Even if Laud defended himself well against the charge of innovation, some puritans would never agree to disagree over what constituted pure worship. As shown earlier in this chapter, the Reformed held the deep conviction that God would not suffer images to remain in the churches without eventual retribution. Therefore, for the safety of England and the Gospel, the policies of Laud and the king had to be overturned, even if they had to take up arms to succeed. As Knox had said in the previous century: 'those that would draw us from God (be they Kings or Queens), ... are enemies unto God ... and we declare ourselves enemies unto them'.¹²⁸

i. Puritan opposition and the outbreak of civil war

Regardless of how repulsive Laudian innovations were to puritans like Dowsing in the 1630s, they were left with little recourse during Charles I's Personal Rule. There was no parliamentary process and Laud held a tight grasp on ecclesiastical policy. However, events forced Charles to assemble Parliament in 1640. He would need Parliament to grant funds to continue the languishing Bishops' War with Scotland. Parliament assembled on 13 April 1640.

The first Parliament in eleven years lasted only a short time. The king insisted on discussing how to best win the war with the Scots, a dangerous issue since many members of Parliament had sympathies with the Covenanters whom Charles was trying to suppress. Ignoring much of the talk of the war, Parliament wanted the king to address the nation's concerns over his

¹²⁷ Laud, *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church*, p. 65.

¹²⁸ See note 52 above.

religious (Laudian) policies. The puritan parliamentary leader John Pym voiced the arguments of those who opposed the king and Laud. He began by insisting that Parliament should have the security to oppose policies without fear of being dissolved.¹²⁹ But ‘the reformation of the church’ dominated his list of specific actions that a secure Parliament needed to take. Laud’s innovations were squarely in view.¹³⁰ Ultimately the king dismissed the ‘Short Parliament’ just three weeks after he called it. However, one important development occurred before the king dissolved the body on 5 May. Reform-minded parliamentarians devised plans for a comprehensive parliamentary preaching program, but the obvious brevity of the session precluded implementation. The key to their plan was severing the preaching event from the communion ritual. Previously, when preaching had only been linked with the ritual, there was an inherent limit on preaching since communion was only received once per session of Parliament. Wilson explains the significance of this step: ‘severed from the [ritual], however, there was no theoretical limit to the number of occasions on which Commons could be subjected to preaching’.¹³¹ In the years to come, the program settled into a schedule of monthly fasts with intermittent observances for special occasions, such as the fast dedicated to the Irish crisis on 22 December 1641.¹³²

In the November following the dissolution of the Short Parliament in 1640, members reconvened in a session that would span the remainder of the 1640s. The king had been unable to win the Bishops’ Wars with Scotland and turned to Parliament once again. Contemporaries

¹²⁹ George Yule, *Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament, 1640-1647* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981), p. 106.

¹³⁰ Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, pp. 106-107.

¹³¹ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 36.

¹³² There were also a series of Thanksgiving sermons and power plot anniversary sermons, one of which was preached by Matthew Newcomen. There were also many other sermons preached and published that were not part of the formal ‘program’ of preaching. These are generally indicated on the title page as sermons ‘Preached before sundry of the House of Commons’. In these cases, attendance was not expected from the entire body. However, as Wilson notes, ‘they must be viewed as contributing very directly to the development of the major program of humiliations and thanksgivings’. See *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 44.

would have acknowledged that the conditions which precipitated the Long Parliament were extreme. Many puritans would also have seen in the newly-called session an unprecedented opportunity for reform. A national fast was called on 17 November 1640 to commemorate the assembly of Parliament. The *Journals of the House of Commons* reveal how the body readied itself the day before the first preacher ascended the pulpit: ‘All the members of this House are to meet To-morrow, at Nine of Clock, at St. Margaret’s Church, West-minster’.¹³³ The House convened the following day to hear two ‘fast sermons’ by Stephen Marshall and Cornelius Burges.¹³⁴

Burges and Marshall set a severe anti-Laudian tone at the fast commemorating the new session of Parliament.¹³⁵ Working together the two preachers issued a ‘joint and earnest suit’ to urge the improvement of ‘our true palladium, the true religion’.¹³⁶ They enjoyed widespread support in Parliament. The day after the fast, 18 November, parliamentarians Arthur Ingram and Gilbert Gerrard, two members of the Commons, stood ‘to give Thanks to the Two Gentlemen, Doctor Burgesse and Mr. Marshall, for the great Pains they took in the Sermons they preached Yesterday at the Request of this House’.¹³⁷ So began the days of national humiliations in the

¹³³ House of Commons Journal Volume 2: 16 November 1640, Journal of the House of Commons: volume 2: 1640-1643 (1802), pp. 29-30. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=7894> (accessed 13 October 2008).

¹³⁴ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 239. Dowsing owned both of these sermons. *The First Sermon Preached* (Burges, 17 November 1640) can be found in IV.8 of Dowsing’s collection and *A Sermon Preached to the House of Commons* (Marshall, 17 November 1640) in IV.9 of Dowsing’s collection.

¹³⁵ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 239.

¹³⁶ Paul S. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent 1560-1662* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 267. The ‘suit’ is made plain in the Epistle Dedicatory of Burges’ sermon found in IV.8 of Dowsing’s collection.

¹³⁷ House of Commons Journal Volume 2: 18 November 1640, Journal of the House of Commons: volume 2: 1640-1643 (1802), pp. 30-31. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=10597> (accessed 13 October 2008).

Long Parliament era. As both people and Parliament chose to ‘forbeare [their] victuals’, they offered a collective plea for God’s provision in a time of widespread social anxiety.¹³⁸

The two initial sermons did more than muster applause from parliamentarians. The ‘suit’ brought by Marshall and Burges helped set several reforms in motion. Under the added leadership of Edward Dering, the ‘Committee on Religion’ attempted to undo many of the actions taken in the late 1630s. The committee’s initiatives stirred up excitement among the godly. Paul Seaver unearthed a telling line from the personal correspondence of a contemporary puritan, Thomas Knyvett: ‘Now reformation goes on again as hot as toast ... if thou didst but hear what sermons were preached to the Parliament men, thou wouldst bless thyself’.¹³⁹ Candid enthusiasm like Knyvett’s shows there was a growing belief that Laudian control of the Church of England might well be over. As the sermons went from pulpit to the press, Dowsing was one of the many puritan laymen who were eager to read of a rejuvenated Reformation in Parliament.

The preachers selected to preach before Parliament were highly respected pulpiteers of the day, most of them at the height of their powers. Stephen Marshall stood above them all as a titan of parliamentary preaching. Marshall enjoyed pristine credentials as a graduate of Emmanuel College, successor to Richard Rogers at Wethersfield, and chaplain to the puritan Barnardistan family in Suffolk.¹⁴⁰ He was instrumental, along with distinguished men such as Dowsing’s associate Mathew Newcomen, in bringing forth a ‘petition’ advocating religious

¹³⁸ The phrase comes from Cornelius Burges, in a section marked by Dowsing when the preacher commented on national fasts: ‘You come fast after fast to seek God in his House, you forbeare your victuals, afflict your soules, endure it out a long time; you pray, heare, confesse your sins, and freely acknowledge that all is just that God hath brought upon us and that we suffer less than we deserve’. See Cornelius Burges and Stephen Marshall, *The First Sermon, Preached to the Honourable House of Commons Now Assembled in Parliament at Their Publique Fast, Novemb. 17, 1640. / by Cornelius Burges* (London: Printed by I.L. for Philemon Stephens and Christopher Meredith, 1641). In Dowsing’s collection see IV.8.49-50.

¹³⁹ Knyvett’s letter is quoted in Paul S. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships*, p. 268.

¹⁴⁰ Tom Webster, “Marshall, Stephen (1594/5?–1655).” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18148> (accessed 16 Oct 2008).

reforms to Parliament on 23 January 1641. This secured Marshall's reputation as a dynamic preacher and a leader in church reform.¹⁴¹ He was a constant presence in the House of Commons during The Long Parliament. He was not satisfied with merely preaching to Parliament; he took his message to parliamentary armies as well. On one occasion Marshall 'equipped himself with a buff coat and rode out with sword and pistols as Chaplain' to an advancing force of 'roundheads'.¹⁴² Dowsing's collection contains eleven of Marshall's fiery sermons, including his famous *Meroz Cursed* (1641).¹⁴³

Dowsing picked up on the enthusiasm in Parliament. He owned and annotated nearly all of the sermons preached in the run up to the civil war. The sermons allowed him to read how notable puritan voices were interpreting the growing tension in England. He marked with a thick line in the margin as he read the words preached by Joseph Caryl in 1642. Caryl was another regular parliamentary preacher who believed the conditions were right for an impassioned plea for reformation according to the Word. Dowsing's pen ran down the margin as Caryl urged the members to measure all reforms 'by that which transcends all humane Antiquity, Customes, Councils, and Traditions (though all those may contribute some help) The Word of God'.¹⁴⁴

Marshall, Burges and Caryl were not the only preachers who pleaded with Parliament for Reformation. Matthew Newcomen also brought with him to the parliamentary pulpit antipathy towards the ecclesiastical policies of the 1630s. As two vocal members of the pamphleteering

¹⁴¹ Webster, "Marshall, Stephen (1594/5-1655)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁴² Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689*, p. 102. Simeon Ashe and Obadiah Sedgwick also brought scriptural exhortation to parliamentary regiments.

¹⁴³ Stephen Marshall, *Meroz Cursed, or, a Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Solemn Fast, Febr. 23, 1641 by Stephen Marshall* (London: Printed by R. Badger for Samuel Gellibrand, 1641). This sermon is examined below in the thematic analysis of Dowsing's collection in Chapter Six.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph Caryl, *The Workes of Ephesus Explained in a Sermon before the Honourable House of Commons at Their Late Solemne Fast, April 27th. 1642. By Ioseph Caryl, Preacher to the Honourable Society of Lincolnes Inne* ([London]: Printed for Iohn Bartlet and William Bladen, and are to be Sold at the signe of the Guilt Cup, neare Saint Augustines Gate, 1642). In Dowsing's collection see IV.16. Caryl's sermon will figure prominently in the thematic analysis of the sermons in Chapter Six. The line is also quoted in John Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 209.

brotherhood Smectymnuus, Marshall and Newcomen were already associated with calls for religious reform.¹⁴⁵ Together with Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young and William Spurstowe, the notorious band made the most of their time before Parliament. For example, Dowsing's pen was once again in motion as he read Thomas Young's provocative series of questions in a sermon to the House of Commons in 1643:

Shall the upholding of religion to you and to your posterity be dearer to our ever-honoured Worthies, than their own lives and estates? And will you not shew courage in cleaving to them in your just defence? Shall the rulers with Joab arme themselves with brave resolutions to be valiant for God, for their people, and for the Cities of their God?¹⁴⁶

Two years into the session Newcomen cautioned Parliament of the 'craft and cruelty of the church's adversaries' which made reforms a matter of life or death. In so doing, he sketched the historical significance of the Long Parliament by casting the members as participants in a celebrated tradition of reform in England. Dowsing owned Newcomen's sermon, and placed a pen stroke in the margin of the text as the Dedham preacher lauded reforms that took place under Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Dowsing also drew a line next to the paragraph in which Newcomen encouraged the House of Commons to continue in the reforming tradition:

this third time hath God raised up Instruments for the advancing of his worke, even your selves ... [and] though you have met with the same oppositions in this great imployment as that Worthy Nehemiah did ... you have attended upon this work these two years.¹⁴⁷

It was important to link Parliament to historical precedent and biblical drama, and Newcomen delivered on both counts. There was a danger that such preaching could leave the Commons

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion of 'Smectymnuus' see Chapter One (1.II.ii).

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Young, *Hopes Incouragement Pointed at in a Sermon, Preached in St. Margarets Westminster, before the Honorable House of Commons, Assembled in Parliament: At the Last Solemn Fast, February 28. 1643. By Tho. Young. Published by Order of the House of Commons* (Printed at London: for Ralph Smith, at the sign of the Bible in Cornhill, neere the Royall Exchange, 1644), p. 37. In Dowsing's collection see V.4.37. Young applied 2 Samuel 10.12 in which King David's general, Joab, was surrounded by enemies 'before and behind'. Upon seeing the difficulty of the battle ahead, Joab commanded, 'Be of good courage and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord do what is good in His sight'.

¹⁴⁷ Newcomen, *The Craft and Cruelty of the Churches Adversaries* (1643). In Dowsing's collection see II.5.Epistle Dedicatory.

with an inflated sense of importance and entitlement. Two years later, William Spurstowe added a little sobriety to the body when he reminded Parliament that past mercies were no guarantee of future ones. Spurstowe preached, 'though the mercies which [we] enjoy be as great as the Sea, yet [we] cannot challenge a drop as due'.¹⁴⁸

Edmund Calamy had struck a similar chord when Commons called him to preach at the first monthly fast on 23 February 1642. On this occasion Calamy set the trajectory for future fasts. He reminded the body that they must not presume on God, believing that such a national observance would secure God's favour. Dowsing recorded a line from Calamy's preaching that claimed, 'Nationall mercys come from free grace, not from free will' on the front page of the sermon.¹⁴⁹ Calamy struck the important balance, held by many puritans, between a Christian's confident claim of divine favour and the humble plea for divine mercy.

Although he was not a member of Smectymnuus, Burges was a parliamentary favourite and is well represented in Dowsing's volumes. Tai Liu concluded that 'it was with the meeting of the Long Parliament that Burges emerged as one of the most prominent and influential puritan divines in London'.¹⁵⁰ Dowsing purchased five of Burges' sermons, reading one of them prior to the period of his iconoclastic campaign. Like Marshall, Burges took on many of the leadership responsibilities for the puritan cause in Parliament. His regular exhortations to Commons

¹⁴⁸ William Spurstowe, *Englands Eminent Judgments Caus'd by the Abuse of Gods Eminent Mercies Discovered in a Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable House of Lords in the Abbey Church at Westminster at the Publique Thanksgiving, Novemb. 5, 1644 / by William Spurstowe* (London: Printed by E. G. for John Rothwell, 1644), p. 21. In Dowsing's collection see II.20.21. Like Newcomen's message, this was a Powder Plot sermon. There are two varying emphases in these exhortations. Newcomen emphasized the craftiness of papists and God's deliverance; Spurstowe hoped to disparage a false sense of security which might lead to laxity in reformation.

¹⁴⁹ Edmund Calamy, *Gods Free Mercy to England. Presented as a Pretious, and Powerfull Motive to Humiliation: In a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Solemne Fast, Feb. 23. 1641. By Edmund Calamy, B.D. And Preacher at Aldermanbury London. Published by Order of the House of Commons* (London: Printed for Christopher Meredith, at the Crane in S. Pauls Church-yard, 1642). In Dowsing's collection see IV.15.1.

¹⁵⁰ Tai Liu, "Burges, Cornelius (d. 1665)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3967> (accessed 16 October 2008).

allowed him to secure a place in the Westminster Assembly in 1646. As he preached at the fast with Marshall in 1640, the two of them set the ‘basic tone of puritan preaching throughout the years of the English revolution’.¹⁵¹

The preachers’ positive agenda was responsible for many of the reform measures in the Long Parliament. Their influence also transcended the House of Commons and reached the houses of common people. There is evidence that godly laity looked to the parliamentary preachers as their best hope for lasting reform. On many occasions, unruly mobs of Englishmen protested outside of Westminster led by the preachers themselves. As Brian Manning has observed, ‘Cornelius Burgess [sic] was signalled out as the ringleader of the mobs’, assisted by Edmund Calamy, William Bridge and Stephen Marshall.¹⁵² Bridge, known as one of the ‘Five Dissenting Brethren’ for his Independent views, preached in a way that was attractive to the masses. In 1641 his sermon *Babylons Downfall* rallied puritans with a call to ‘let the Reformation be full and perfect, and let every man say, Babylon shall fall, I also will have a hand in it and shoulder at it. Downe with it, downe with it, even to the ground.’¹⁵³ Calls for each man to have a ‘shoulder at it’ resonated with the dissatisfied populace. Dowsing read this sermon not long after it was published and lent a rather effective shoulder to the work. Dowsing was a layman who, like the preachers, believed that the ‘fitt tyme’ for action had come.

¹⁵¹ Liu, “Burgess, Cornelius (d. 1665),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁵² Brian Stuart Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution, 1640-1649* (London: Heinemann, 1976), p. 92.

¹⁵³ William Bridge, *Babylons Downfall a Sermon Lately Preached at Westminster before Sundry of the Honourable House of Commons / by William Bridge* (London: Printed by I. N. for Iohn Rothwell, 1641). In Dowsing’s collection see IV.4.23. For Bridge’s partnership with the ‘Five Dissenting Brethren’ see Avihu Zakai, “Religious Toleration and Its Enemies: The Independent Divines and the Issue of Toleration During the English Civil War,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 21, no. 1 (1989), p. 8. The other members included Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, and Jeremiah Burroughs. Together they published a treatise in 1643 titled *An Apologetical Narration*, which outlined their call for religious toleration. Needless to say, popery was intolerable in the 1640s, even to those who advocated religious freedom.

Tensions escalated when an Irish Catholic disturbance brought the issue of military control to a head in 1641.¹⁵⁴ Later that year Parliament held a fast to seek God's aid in the Irish crisis. Edmund Calamy and Stephen Marshall (two members of Smectymnuus) both preached at the fast. In his morning sermon, *Englands Looking Glasse*, Calamy called on Parliament to 'perfect a Reformation according to the Word of God'. Marshall's afternoon sermon, *Reformation and Desolation* echoed Calamy's theme.¹⁵⁵ It was clear that puritans wanted to push Parliament to 'seek first the kingdom of God' so that God would save the 'Kingdom of England' from its woes. Also in 1641, Pym added to the growing unrest by encouraging 'anti-popish demonstrations'. These were effective tools. As John Coffey has shown, 'unruly mobs ... intimidated the lords and bishops on numerous occasions'.¹⁵⁶

In 1642 crises like the Irish rebellion which erupted in 1641 still required parliamentary attention. Parliament passed a bill declaring its own power to control the military without the assent of the king. This move suggested that the opposition in Parliament 'was determined to deprive [Charles] of almost all of his remaining constitutional powers, as he could not be trusted to exert them in the interests of Protestantism'.¹⁵⁷ For his part, the king convinced large numbers of parliamentarians, as well as subjects in England and Wales, that he 'stood for defence of the traditional constitution and Church doctrine ... as established by Elizabeth'.¹⁵⁸ Both sides refused to yield in the face of rising pressure. As civil war became increasingly unavoidable, the king went to York out of fears that he would be taken by force in London. In York he asked for Yorkshire volunteers in large enough numbers to form a regiment and bodyguard. Members of

¹⁵⁴ See Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 35ff.

¹⁵⁵ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, pp. 55-56. Dowsing purchased and read both of these sermons before his iconoclasm in 1643.

¹⁵⁶ John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689*, Studies in Modern History (Harlow: Longman, 2000), p. 137.

¹⁵⁷ Malcolm Wanklyn and Frank Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War, 1642-1646: Strategy and Tactics* (Harlow, Eng.; New York, NY: Longman/Pearson Education, 2005), pp. 8-9.

¹⁵⁸ Wanklyn and Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War*, p. 8.

Parliament took this to be an open act of war. In mid-June 1642 both sides aggressively garnered supplies and ammunition and appointed generals. The English Civil War had officially begun. Large numbers of the Lords and Commons absconded and became the king's makeshift Parliament in Oxford.¹⁵⁹ When parliamentary and royalist forces met in battle, parliamentary roundheads marched under a banner reading, 'Let God arise and his enemies will be scattered'.¹⁶⁰

These developments are significant in understanding the theological climate of the 1640s. Spraggon wrote,

The collapse of Charles's personal rule following defeat in the unpopular Bishops' War with Scotland, and the outbreak of civil war between king and parliament – meant that a minority of godly parliamentarians were in a position to effect political and religious change.¹⁶¹

In essence, although much of the country was horrified at the rising military conflict, puritans in Parliament (and beyond) saw the clash as a divinely ordained opportunity to remove idolatry from England. John Coffey argued that although many moderate MPs saw this as a chance to return to the 'equilibrium' enjoyed under James I, puritan MPs 'had been radicalised by their experience of persecution under Laud' and they had 'a far more drastic vision of further reformation'.¹⁶² Puritans in and out of Parliament saw the providential hand of God removing a popish king so that they could finally apply ideals expressed by Bucer, Calvin, Knox, Perkins and a host of other Reformed writers. Puritans in Parliament behaved as though they were motivated by a great cloud of witnesses that had gone before them. It was time to rescue the Church from Laudian captivity.

¹⁵⁹ Wanklyn and Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War*, p. 40.

¹⁶⁰ See Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England*, p. 139. Coffey is quoting from I. Gentles, "The Iconography of Revolution: England 1642-49," *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen of the English Revolution*, ed. I. Gentles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 91-113.

¹⁶¹ Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm in the English Civil War*, p. xi.

¹⁶² Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England*, p. 135.

ii. The Long Parliament's call to preserve

It should not be assumed that parliamentary preachers voiced the unified opinion of Parliament, even after the outbreak of civil war. Furthermore, it would be a mistake to interpret the parliamentary sermons as messages from Parliament rather than as messages to Parliament. Preachers were invited to address the members of Parliament in order to remind them of the gravity of their circumstances and to encourage them toward religious duty. Technically speaking, the preachers were the 'vox cathari' to Parliament not the voice of Parliament. However, there was a close association between the preachers and many of the gathered members. Although many of the parliamentarians might have lacked a puritan zeal at first, they soon felt the weight of the preachers' priorities. John Morrill has written that 'as MPs listened to preachers at the monthly days of fasting setting the issues in a providentialist and apocalyptic context of God's wrath ... many more MPs became convinced that there could be no going back to the church before Laud'.¹⁶³ The church needed a wholesale Reformation that addressed both Laudian and pre-Laudian excesses. Parliamentarians made these sympathies clear.

What can be seen in the Long Parliament is an overt move by the puritan 'party' to effect a full and final Reformation in England. Parliamentary preachers wanted to ensure that Parliament 'kept to its right priorities'.¹⁶⁴ The laity needed protection from the dangers of popish idolatry. It was incumbent upon Parliament to lead the nation back to the purity of the early church, free from images and idolatrous altars. Even before open war erupted during the Long Parliament, puritans were calling for a theological revolution in England. However, events that

¹⁶³ Morrill, "The Puritan Revolution," *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. Coffey and Lim, p. 69.

¹⁶⁴ Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, p. 107.

transpired in the 1640s would carry puritans closer than ever toward their ideal of ‘biblical’ worship.

The Long Parliament had clear priorities, one of which was bringing a sense of peace to the ecclesiastical situation in England. They debated whether episcopacy should be reformed or abolished, argued over the extent to which the Reformation should be ‘carried out’, and continually returned to the subject of conflict with Laud and the king. Clear signs of their priorities emerged in the ‘Root and Branch Petition’ of 11 December 1640. The petition, submitted to the king near the beginning of the Long Parliament, lists some twenty eight particulars which grieved the king’s people.¹⁶⁵ The petition concluded with three effects that these errors would cause. The drafters were confident that ‘Romish’ religion would ‘ere long be fully planted in this kingdom again’. Next, the king’s papist practices and the restriction on clergy had convinced many subjects to leave England, taking with them valuable contributions to the economy. Finally, the present wars with Scotland were the direct result of imposed popery among the Scots.

Parliamentary preachers were even more emphatic. In 1641, Nathaniel Holmes demanded that Parliament call an assembly of divines who could ‘draw nakedly out of the scriptures those clear truths concerning this new state of the church’.¹⁶⁶ The proposal went beyond the parliamentary tradition of calling prominent preachers to give counsel on national matters. In 1642 Parliament began receiving names of suitable delegates for an assembly that

¹⁶⁵ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. 137ff. There is a similar sentiment in the “Petition of Twelve Peers for the Summoning of a New Parliament” of 28 August 1640. The drafters of that petition called on the king to end ‘sundry innovations in matters of religion, the oath and canons lately imposed upon the clergy and others of your Majesty’s subjects’. See *The Constitutional Documents*, p. 135. Anthony Fletcher has shown that this kind of petitioning became the method of choice for godly representatives in various localities, arguing ‘Petitioning had become the most potent weapon in the provincial armoury.’ See Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 191.

¹⁶⁶ Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, p. 132. Yule is quoting Holmes’ sermon *The New World* from 30 May 1641.

would be responsible for ‘treating amongst themselves of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God’s holy word and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home and nearer agreement to the church of Scotland’.¹⁶⁷ The desire to draw closer to ‘the church of Scotland’ was ratified in 1643 with the Solemn League and Covenant, which united England and Scotland in a military (league) and religious (covenant) alliance in the struggle with the king. John Wilson summarized the importance of the Solemn League and Covenant:

Besides being of tactical importance in bringing the Scots into the struggle, [the Solemn League and Covenant] was also the most effective means – that is, useful language – for articulating the interrelated, religious, political, and social goals of the Long Parliament, goals wholeheartedly embraced by the preachers.¹⁶⁸

The result of the Solemn League and Covenant and the Assembly of Divines (‘Westminster Assembly’) was a renewed sense that providence had orchestrated the perfect opportunity for Reformation. This zeal resulted in a glut of smaller measures which worked toward the reversal of Laudianism. One of the key measures came on 28 August 1643 when the Long Parliament enacted the ordinance of The Lords and Commons; ‘for the utter demolishing, removing, and taking away of all monuments of superstition or idolatry’. It was in the wake of this ordinance that William Dowsing took the iconoclastic baton passed down through the Reformed tradition.

IV. Conclusion

As Reformed Orthodoxy matured and became more articulate, so did the movement’s iconoclastic rationale. William Dowsing operated according to an iconoclastic rationale which came to maturity in the thought of John Calvin and John Knox. William Perkins helped to shape

¹⁶⁷ Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, p. 119. Yule is quoting the instruction given to the assembly as relayed by John Lightfoot’s account of “The Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines,” p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 170.

this rationale into an easily-accessible set of arguments with the aid of Ramist method. Perkins introduced later generations to this brand of Calvinism through his teaching, writing and emphasis on plain style preaching. The regulative principle of English Calvinists met a formidable challenge when William Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Tensions between Laudians and puritans created an environment ripe for civil war. Laud's close association with the king made ecclesiastical policy and kingly authority inextricably linked in the mind of many puritans. Confidence in the king's commitment to the Reformation waned, and zealous puritans spoke more openly about the need for wholesale reform 'according to the Word of God'. Military conflict erupted in the early 1640s creating an unforeseen opportunity to complete the Reformation.

In the Reformed tradition, iconoclasm became a tool used to preserve the 'faith delivered once to the saints'. In the writings of Bucer, Calvin, Knox and Perkins religious images represented a threat to the very Gospel itself. For them, Catholic superstition was a disease that could only be cured by removing this kind of imagery from worship. In the 1640s, puritans agreed that images represented a danger to the Gospel. However, they also believed that religious images (idols) threatened the safety and security of England. They held that God would surely exercise his wrath on this nation, once crowned with his blessings, which had fallen so far in its affection for Antichrist. Therefore, in an effort to purge the nation of offensive idols, Parliament enacted a series of iconoclastic ordinances, including the one dated 28 August 1643. As indicated in Chapter Two, it was this ordinance that supposedly gave the Earl of Manchester the authority to commission William Dowsing. The campaign that carried Dowsing to churches and chapels in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk in 1643-44 was predicated on a tradition of Reformed iconophobia and occasioned by the Laudian control of the church in the 1630s.

Having provided a sketch of the history of many iconoclastic thoughts and Laudian deeds which led to Dowsing's iconoclasm, it is proper now to explore the series of events for which the iconoclast is best known. Part Two of this thesis begins by portraying Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign as a zealous rebuttal of the Laudianism of the 1630s.

PART TWO

THE MIND OF THE ICONOCLAST

Chapter 4

A Theology Applied: William Dowsing's Iconoclastic Campaign

I. The Iconoclast and His Journal

The goal thus far has been to penetrate William Dowsing's community and to examine his iconoclasm from within the Reformed tradition. To accomplish this, previous chapters identified Dowsing as a godly farmer and soldier who would have likely remained an obscure seventeenth-century laymen in Suffolk, had it not been for the events of 1643-44. All the evidence indicates that Dowsing operated among the rank and file in the puritan cause leading up to the civil war period. Before and after his iconoclastic campaign there was little to distinguish him from his neighbours and fellow soldiers. His life, and the convictions that spurred him onto iconoclasm, provide an opportunity to examine iconoclastic thought from within the godly movement. The campaign of 1643-44 would quickly make Dowsing known far outside the puritan fold. His journey from anonymity to infamy began on the road to Cambridgeshire in the winter of 1643.

Dowsing arrived in Cambridge just three months after the Earl of Essex led parliamentary forces to victory at the First Battle of Newbury on 20 September 1643.¹ Such recent military successes against royalist forces in the east may have emboldened Dowsing to carry out the iconoclastic ordinance of August 1643. When the first glass shattered in Cambridge in December, Dowsing claimed another victory for Parliament and puritan ideals. What he actually shattered was the perceived Laudian domination of the church. As Dowsing toppled 'monuments of superstition' in wood, stone and glass in Cambridge and Suffolk he simultaneously erected something less tangible: a theology of worship fuelled by Word and Spirit. This chapter examines the theological convictions underpinning Dowsing's campaign and

¹ Wanklyn and Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War*, p. 124.

argues that his iconoclasm was not mindless vandalism but an applied theology of worship. The Scripture texts he cited at the beginning of his journal and the actions he took further demonstrate Dowsing's sense that his iconoclastic crusade was a moral imperative. He believed that England, the Reformation and future generations would be safe if he successfully executed idols in the land.

Dowsing's journal is not ideal for a theological investigation because he did not expound the theological implications of what he did. What the journal recorded were the results of a lifetime of settled convictions concerning worship. We see kinetic Puritanism, Reformed theology in action. In a sense, the first three chapters of this project provided the framework for understanding the world in which Dowsing's theological personality took shape. The events highlighted in this chapter are the natural behaviours of a personality shaped almost entirely by theological concerns. Dowsing's journal is full of theological implications even if the iconoclast did not explicitly articulate them. Dowsing's entries allow readers to glean this information more from what he did than what he wrote.

II. Dowsing's Marching Orders: Of Pentateuch and Parliament

Dowsing was a man who believed in authority. Like most of his puritan brethren he respected the institution of Parliament and gave due respect to the king. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize that Dowsing saw his iconoclasm as fully authorised. Before studying Dowsing on his iconoclastic campaign it is important now to examine the authority for his mission. The iconoclast actually had three supporting documents for his campaign. The first was the Bible; the second was the ordinance of Parliament; the third was the commission from the Earl of Manchester (but since Manchester's commission fell under the auspices of parliamentary

ordinance, this chapter will not address the commission separately). In Dowsing's mind, these documents conveyed the blessing of state and church, Parliament and Pentateuch.² It is difficult to separate Scripture and Ordinance because Parliament based its prohibition on a scriptural mandate. However, the two documents should not be conflated. Parliament needed to act for iconoclasm to be legal, even if parliamentarians believed that Scripture had already made iconoclasm moral. While Dowsing was finally set in motion by an act of Parliament, his permission came first from the pages of Scripture. In this examination of Dowsing's supporting documents, the most appropriate place to start is with what Dowsing believed to be the Law of God.

All the Scripture passages that Dowsing cited at the front of his journal are from the Pentateuch. This raises the question of how he interpreted each of the verses he cited. A partial answer may come from Dowsing's library. John Morrill's investigative work on Dowsing's library revealed that Dowsing owned a copy of Gervase Babington's *Comfortable Notes Upon the Five Books of Moses* (1604), although the whereabouts of Dowsing's copy are unknown.³ It is possible that Dowsing gleaned some of his understanding of the Law from this text.

Babington was not a radical puritan. John S. Macauley rightly described him as a typical sixteenth-century Calvinist Episcopalian.⁴ But a sermon he preached at Paul's Cross in 1591 shows that he was an ardent defender of predestination and he was thought to have sympathy for Elizabethan puritans. Even without the ability to read Dowsing's annotations to the text,

² See Chapter Two (2.III) for a discussion of Manchester and his commission. This is not to suggest that Dowsing saw a separation between church and state. However, both had their proper voice and Dowsing believed that both had spoken in favour of iconoclasm.

³ Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 5.

⁴ John S. Macauley, "Babington, Gervase (1549/50–1610)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/973> (accessed 10 December 2008). See also Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, pp. 251–252.

Babington's *Comfortable Notes* may help demonstrate how Dowsing interpreted the Scripture verses he listed at the beginning of his journal. Not all of Dowsing's references receive comment by Babington but his work exemplifies the Reformed attitude toward images in a book owned by Dowsing.

The first reference that Dowsing lists at the beginning of the journal is Numbers 33:4, 52 and 55. Numbers 33 is a rehearsal of Israel's deliverance from Egypt coupled with instructions for the pending conquest of Canaan. The purpose of the chapter is to encourage the readers to repudiate the idolatry endemic in life in Egypt and to march forward in the bold conquest of their promised land. Verse 4 reminds the Children of Israel that, in the past, God had 'executed judgement' on the Egyptian 'gods' they had left behind. Verse 52 looks forward to what needed to be done to secure God's blessing on their new home:

Ye shall then drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you, and destroy all their pictures, and breake asunder all their images of metall, and plucke downe all their hie places.

Babington gives an important caveat for the application of these verses:

Let us learn to feare by these judgments, for God is the same ever if we provoke him with our sinnes. And let us also know that here be given a great charge to destroy, yet it was to the Govenours, and not every private man at his will without directions and commandments from them, and for Idols and Pictures it was meant those that were idolatrous indeed, not lawfull remembrance of persons or actions commendable, whereof every nation hath some.⁵

Dowsing's actions are consistent with Babington's warning. Dowsing's letter to Matthew Newcomen called the moment the 'fitt tyme' to seek the action of 'parliament men'. He did not envision removing images outside of Parliament's authority. Incidentally, the parliamentary

⁵ Gervase Babington, *The Workes of the Right Reuerend Father in God, Gervase Babington, Late Bishop of Worcester Containing Comfortable Notes Upon the Five Bookes of Moses* (London: Printed by G. Eld and M. Flesher [for H. Fetherstone], and are to be sold by Iohn Parker at the signe of the three Pigeons in Pauls Church-yard, 1622), p. 144.

ordinance is consistent with the second half of Babington's warning as Parliament carefully protected images placed in remembrance of a nobleman or donor.

Verse 55 warns that if the cleansing was not complete then the remaining idolaters would be 'irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides'. This has fascinating resonance in Dowsing's context. In the collective consciousness of the Reformed, God had cast judgment on the 'gods' of the past, namely the Church of Rome. The Reformation was a sort of 'conquest' in which moulded images and high places were under the ban. In the civil war phase of the Reformation the godly grasped their chance to cleanse England of papists and Laudians lest they remain as 'irritants in [their] eyes and thorns in [their] sides'.

Dowsing's second reference was Leviticus 26:1 and 30. Verse 1 is a straightforward restatement of the second commandment followed by incentives and warnings to avoid idols. After listing the warnings, Babington commented 'They are many; they are fearfull ...O Tremble to provoke this God against you'.⁶ Babington also emphasized that the third blessing for obeying this command was 'a promised victory over your enemies'. Verse 30 is a rather graphic warning to Israel should they ever turn to idols. The Lord warns, '[if you stubbornly disobey me] I will also destroy your hye places, & cut away your images, and cast your carkeises upon the bodies of your idoles, and my soule shall abhorre you'. This kind of reference helps to remind modern readers of the gravity with which Dowsing approached his campaign. Dowsing would not have read this as an idle threat or rhetoric. He was at war and the possibility of death was real. There was a clear biblical precedent for God allowing the enemies of Israel to triumph as a punishment for idolatry. Dowsing placed this warning on the very front page of his journal as if to remind himself of the consequences of failure.

⁶ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 419.

Third, Dowsing cited Deuteronomy 7:4, 25 and 26. If historians marvel at the brutality of Dowsing's iconoclasm or the seeming lack of sympathy recorded in the journal, they need only turn to the verses Dowsing cited from Deuteronomy to understand. Chapter 7 verse 4 warns of what could happen 'suddenly' if Israel's sons were carried away to serve other gods. The Lord warned that if such apostasy occurred then he could destroy them at any moment. This was the kind of looming judgement that puritans saw hanging over England as long as even a quasi-papist system of worship remained. Verse 4 provided the emotional resolve for continued Reformation. Then verses 25 and 26 prescribe a method to assuage God's wrath on England:

The graven images of their gods shall ye burne with fire, and covet not the silver and golde, that is on them, nor take it unto thee, least thou be snared therewith: for it is an abomination before the Lord thy God. Bring not therefore abomination into thine house, lest, thou be accursed like it, but utterly abhorre it, and count it most abominable: for it is accursed.

Dowsing then cited Deuteronomy 12:2, which reads 'Yee shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possesse, served their gods upon the hie mountaines and upon the hilles, and under every greene tree'. Surprisingly, Dowsing employed the emotional force of these verses but did not always apply them literally. He did not utterly destroy the places of worship, but sought to utterly destroy symbols of a system of worship. In fact, in many places Dowsing did not 'utterly destroy' anything, but simply defaced the images to render them impotent to mislead the people of God.⁷

Dowsing's final citation appears somewhat out of place. He cited Genesis 31:34, a text recounting Rachel's theft all of the idols ('gods') from her father's (Laban's) household when she left with her husband, Jacob. After Laban searched in vain for the idols he pursued Jacob. Dowsing's inclusion of this verse is strange. Rachel stole the idols, lied to her father and

⁷ For further discussion on Dowsing's tendency to 'scar' images rather than utterly destroy them see Trevor Cooper, "Brass, Glass, and Crosses: Identifying Iconoclasm Outside the Journal," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 90, 94.

allowed Laban to accuse Jacob of the theft. In one verse she broke what would later be revealed as the first, second, fifth, eighth, ninth and tenth commandments. Babington's notes call this evidence of 'a great fault in a good woman'.⁸ The verse does not lend particularly strong support for iconoclasm since, as Calvin wrote, the verse reveals Rachel's 'obstinate love of idolatry'.⁹ Perhaps Dowsing cited this passage using Rachel as an example of the kind of idolatry he was opposing. The verse may indict English believers for whom idolatry was a great fault in an otherwise 'good' people. Nevertheless, at face value it seems that Dowsing may not have accounted for the context of this verse when citing it.

If Scripture provided Dowsing's moral justification for iconoclasm, then the parliamentary ordinance provided the legal boundaries for iconoclasm. Although the House of Commons passed the ordinance in 1643, there had been earlier efforts in Parliament to destroy England's idols. Many of these efforts were summarized in the 'Root and Branch' petition delivered to Parliament in 1640. The signatories called for, among other things, an immediate end to

the turning of the Communion table altar-wise, setting images, crucifixes, and conceits over them, and tapers and books upon them, and bowing or adoring to or before them; the reading of the second service at the altar, and forcing people to come up thither to receive, or else denying the Sacrament to them; terming the altar to be the mercy-seat, or the place of God Almighty in the church, which is a plain device to usher in the Mass.¹⁰

The petitioners' strident language was not universally endorsed. Sir Edward Dering warned that 'Root and Branch' had become a dangerous 'Shibboleth whereby some try whether you

⁸ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 101.

⁹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis*, 2 vols., Calvin's Commentaries (Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1847).

¹⁰ The full text of the petition is available from the Hanover Historical Texts Project at <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/ENGref/er97.html> (accessed 24 March 2008).

are for Ruine or for Reformation'.¹¹ Dering was correct to assume that the petition would become a shibboleth for entrance into the Reformed fold. In fact, his speeches were published in 1641 for the 'vindication of his name' against those who had branded him anti-reform. Perhaps Dering was relieved when the Root and Branch petition failed to secure a successful Bill from Parliament. But the move toward a 'completed reformation' continued. As mentioned in Chapter One, Parliament called for the removal of images in 1641 based on Exodus 34:13, 'Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles'.¹² Also in 1641, Parliament declared that college chapels need not require worshippers to pay reverence to the communion table.¹³

But the ordinance of 1643 was even more decisive. To be sure, the actions of Parliament were becoming increasingly bold in the early 1640s. There are a few noteworthy characteristics of the ordinance, beginning with its unambiguous wording. The title alone called for the 'utter demolishing, removing, and taking away of all monuments of superstition'.¹⁴ Secondly, the legislation was not voluntary. Parliament targeted 'all of the Churches and Chappels' in both England and Wales. Finally, the text did not seek to accomplish this at an unspecified time, but by 'the First Day of November, 1643'. Churches had two months to apply Parliament's will.

The body of the ordinance makes the point even clearer. Parliament had taken into their 'serious Considerations' that this act would be 'well-pleasing to God' and 'conduceable to the

¹¹ Sir Edward Dering, *A Collection of Speeches Made by Sir Edward Dering, Knight and Baronet, in Matter of Religion. Some Formerly Printed, and Divers More Now Added: All of Them Revised, for the Vindication of His Name, from Weake and Witfull Calummie: And by the Same Sir Edward Dering, Now Subjected to Publike View and Censure, Upon the Urgent Importunity of Many, Both Gentlemen and Divines* (London printed: [s.n.], 1642), p. 2.

¹² See Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 75.

¹³ Trevor Cooper, "Dowsing at Cambridge University," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 51.

¹⁴ *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament; for the Utter Demolishing, Removing, and Taking Away of All Mounuments of Superstition or Idolatry, out of the Churches and Chapels within This Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, before the First Day of November* (1643).

blessed Reformation'. Parliament was at pains to emphasize that 'both Houses' desired the reformation of worship in England and Wales. To avoid any loopholes the text included 'Churches and Chappels, as well as Cathedrall and Collegiate, as other Churches and Chappels, and other usual places of publicke Prayer'.¹⁵ What specific actions did the text demand? First 'All Altars and tables of stone' should be 'utterly taken away and demolished'.¹⁶ There were two likely reasons for this wording. One was so that the churches would be in line with a predominant Reformed understanding of God's Law. The other, less obvious, reason was to thwart the kind of rapid return to idolatry that occurred when Mary I succeeded Edward VI in 1553. In theory, Manchester commissioned Dowsing to prevent the same mistake. These abominations needed to be demolished, not simply 'stored away'.

The ordinance of 1643 sought to end what had become the hallmark of Laudian policy. In the 1630s the widespread practice had been to place the altar at the east end of the church with a rail preventing access to the laity. It ordered 'all Communion Tables removed from the East end ... and shall be placed in some other fit and convenient place ... and all rayles [sic] shall likewise be taken away'. Also, any raised chancel areas were to be levelled to restore the appearance of 'Twenty years past'.¹⁷ These sections of the ordinance represent a clear repudiation of the Laudian agenda. Dowsing's journal records his own effort to place the 'Communion Tables' in their 'fit and convenient' place.

The final category of material addressed by the ordinance was religious 'images'. The text is comprehensive:

And that all Crucifixes, Crosses, and all Images and Pictures of any one or more Persons of the Trinity, or of the Virgin Mary, and all other images and Pictures of Saints or superstitious Incriptions in, or upon all and every the said Churches or Chappels or other

¹⁵ *An Ordinance for the Utter Demolishing*, p. 3.

¹⁶ See Chapter Three (3.III) and Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, pp. 227ff.

¹⁷ *An Ordinance for the Utter Demolishing*, p. 4.

Places of publick Prayer, Church yards, or other places to any the said Churches and Chappels, or other place of publick Prayer, belonging, or in any other open place, shall before the said first day of November be taken away and defaced, and none of the like hereafter permitted in any such Church or Chappell, or other places as aforesaid.¹⁸

According to the drafters of this language this was the final word on the matter. They envisioned the idols as ‘utterly’ demolished and that ‘none of the like’ would ever emerge again in England. The application of the text was not nearly as comprehensive. Even Dowsing left some items untouched, presumably because of the sheer quantity of material under the ban.

The ordinance closed with three important points. The first priority was to indicate that, after the cleansing, the damage ‘shall be made up and repaired in good and sufficient manner’. The cost of these repairs was the responsibility of ‘such persons, Body Politick or corporate, or parishioners ... to whom the charge of the repairs of the church belong’. Next, if the churches failed to carry out the ordinance then a local Justice of the Peace could ‘procure the premises to be performed according to the tenor of this ordinance’. Since the ordinance did not call for any additional orders to be made, Manchester’s commission to Dowsing had little legal merit. However, the ‘spirit’ of the text demanded the removal of superstitious elements. That Dowsing was not a Justice of the Peace might have been an unimportant technicality to Manchester, ameliorated by his thorough efforts in the cause of Reformation. Even if Manchester believed his proposed ends justified his questionable means, the ‘letter’ of the ordinance indicates that Manchester acted *ultra vires* – assuming powers that Parliament had not vested in him. Nevertheless, Dowsing received the commission as consistent with the will of Parliament.

The final point in the ordinance was that no damage should come to any ‘Image, Picture, or coate of Armes in Glasse, Stone or otherwise’ which had been erected in honour of ‘any King, Prince, or Nobleman, or other dead person which hath not been commonly reprinted or taken for

¹⁸ *An Ordinance for the Utter Demolishing*, pp. 4-5.

a Saint'. In other words, Dowsing had no warrant to destroy non-religious images. This is an enlightening section of the text because it demonstrates that the 'puritan' Parliament did not have a grudge against all art or imagery. They were merely interested in removing those images which presented a spiritual danger to English Christians. On a less altruistic note, parliamentarians were also concerned that they would offend influential noblemen if their family memorials were defaced.¹⁹

Dowsing travelled to Cambridgeshire with the assurance that his mission met scriptural and parliamentary standards. He had reviewed the pages of Scripture and found sufficient motivation. Also, as a good soldier he rested in the protection of his commanding officer and the Parliament. All that remained was to bring the churches of Suffolk and Cambridge in line with God's design for worship. There was much to be done.

III. The Destruction Begins: 20 December 1643

Dowsing began the iconoclastic cleansing in Cambridge University chapels. His visits made a lasting impression on the buildings and the college Fellows. Dejected members of the University would later allege that Dowsing 'compelled us by armed souldiers to pay forty shillings a Colledge for not mending what he had spoyled and defaced, or forthwith go to prison'.²⁰ It was true that Dowsing travelled for a while with armed guards, but the threats did not originate with him. Parliament had insisted that it was time for Cambridge to fall in line.

Cambridge had been the centre of controversy in the months leading up to Dowsing's arrival. After Parliament renewed anti-Laudian legislation of 1641, which freed Cambridge

¹⁹ Parliament supplemented the ordinance on 9 May 1644, clarifying the call to demolish all representations of any person of the Trinity, saints and angels. There was also an order to demolish organs within churches and chapels. See Frederick John Varley, *Cambridge During the Civil War, 1642-1646* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 34.

²⁰ Cheshire, "William Dowsing's Destructions in Cambridgeshire," p. 77.

students from paying homage to altars in college chapels, tensions began to grow. In fact, Parliament had been building a case against many of the University colleges since the Long Parliament began hearing testimony in 1640. It was then that Parliament examined 'Dr. Norton' who had 'complained that he had a son at Cambridge and that certain Fellows of Peterhouse had endeavoured to seduce him to Popery'.²¹ Added to the growing list of complaints against the University, Cambridge was also becoming a more strategic location for the war effort and Parliament had doubts about loyalty from within the University. There were instances of violence between parliamentary soldiers and members of the University. In May 1643 Cambridge's Vice-Chancellor Richard Holdsworth reprinted the king's York declarations and was subsequently arrested. Sensing the growing hostility Cambridge petitioned Parliament to 'right the wrongs' they had committed against the University and its students. As a sign of protest, the University elected Holdsworth as Professor of Divinity, an appointment which was difficult to fulfil from his cell in London.²² This action only increased the tensions between Parliament and much of the University community.

Another point of tension was that many of the Cambridge chapels underwent massive Laudian reconstruction in the 1630s. The most obvious changes came to chapels in King's, Peterhouse, St. John's, Queen's, Jesus and Pembroke colleges. This explains why the first entry of Dowsing's journal records destruction at 'Peter-House'. He intended to target the most obnoxious elements first and then move on to the lesser offenders. Peterhouse was remodelled under John Cosin's direction, a fact that made him unpopular among parliamentarians. In 1640, Cosin had to appear for examination by Parliament under charges that he 'turned to the east in celebrating communion, that he covered cushions and benches with crosses [and] that he had

²¹ Varley, *Cambridge during the Civil War*, p. 30.

²² For a complete chronology of these events see J. D. Twigg, "The Parliamentary Visitation of the University of Cambridge, 1644-1645," *The English Historical Review* 98, no. 388 (1983), p. 514.

spoken scandalously of the reformers'.²³ When he appeared before the committee he knelt down, which led one of examiners to quip 'Heere is no altar Dr. Cosin'. Cosin replied, 'Why then, I hope there shall be no sacrifice'.²⁴

Cosin's reputation as an unapologetic Laudian extended to Peterhouse. The first date Dowsing lists for the Peterhouse visitation was 21 December, but he ends the entry with 'Dec. 20, and 23'. This means the major work occurred in two visits between 20 and 23 December. The corresponding entry sets the model for what follows with other colleges:

1. Peter-House. We went to Peter-house, 1643, December 21, with officers and soldiers, and in the presence of Mr. Hanscott, Mr. Wilson, the President Mr. Francis, Mr. Maxey, and other Fellows, Dec. 20 and 23.
We pulled down two mighty great angells, with wings, and divers other angells, and the 4 Evangelists, and Peter, with his keis on the chapel door (See Ezek. viii. 36, 37 and ix. 6; Isa. xxvii.9 and xxx.22) and about a hundred chirubims and angels, and divers superstitious letters in gold.
And at the upper-end of the chancel, these words were written as followeth: Hic locus est domus Dei, nil aliud, & porta coeli.²⁵

Dowsing then corrects himself to say that the final phrase was not written at Peterhouse at all, but rather at 'Keyes Colledge'. The Latin phrase reads, 'This place is a house of God, no other, and a gate to Heaven'. The text from Ezekiel must be an error since the eighth chapter only contains eighteen verses. Trevor Cooper suggests that the citation should be 6:3-7, which would be consistent with Dowsing's citation from Leviticus 26:30 at the beginning of the journal. The Leviticus and Ezekiel citations vividly refer to the Lord stacking Israel's 'carcasses' in front of their idolatrous altars. Ezekiel 9:6 is another graphic depiction of God's wrath on an idolatrous people. In a prophetic vision, Ezekiel beholds figures 'in linen' who were sent to save the faithful and 'utterly destroy' idolaters in Israel. The figure charged with executing idolaters is

²³ Anthony Milton, "Cosin, John (1595–1672)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6372> (accessed 10 December 2008).

²⁴ Milton, "Cosin, John (1595-1672)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

²⁵ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 155-156, entry 1.

told to ‘begin in my Sanctuary’. It seems the chapel door brought this image to mind for Dowsing since Ezekiel 9:3 records the Lord’s Cherub sitting on the door of a house bringing the message of destruction from the Lord. Isaiah 27:9 promises that the iniquity of Jacob shall be ‘purged’ when the idols of the land are made as ‘chalk stones and broken in pieces’. In another explicit passage, Isaiah 30:22 relates God’s command that even images of gold are to be cast away ‘as menstruous cloth, and thou shalt say to [them], Get thee hence’. Taken together, the Scripture references, complete with ‘carcasses’ and ‘filthy rags’, stand in stark contrast to the rich ornaments of the chapels in which Dowsing stood. According to the verses Dowsing cited the gold inscriptions and ornate imagery he encountered offended his sense of what was good and holy. They were dangerous temptations which had deceived a generation of English Christians and were securing divine wrath.

Dowsing intended to ‘cleanse’ these places of worship. However, the Fellows of many of the colleges were quick-thinking and were able to hide a good amount of contraband. Cooper’s edition of Dowsing’s journal includes a list of items that were discovered hidden in the Perne library in 1650. One secreted treasure was ‘One picture of Gregorius’.²⁶ The rest of the hidden material amounted to a series of velvet and taffeta altar cloths stored away in hopes that the altars would soon return. This hiding place underscores the obvious truth that many of the Fellows in Cambridge were neither compliant to the Ordinance nor fond of Dowsing.

Between the dates of 20 December and 25 December, Dowsing visited several other chapels. Besides two separate visits to Peterhouse, Dowsing addressed Laudian innovations in St. Clement’s, Jesus, Gonville and Caius (‘Keyes’), and the Holy Trinity church on 25 December. It was not by mistake that Dowsing visited Holy Trinity on Christmas Day, since

²⁶ “Table J1: Items from Peterhouse chapel discovered hidden in the Perne Library in 1650,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 158.

such a visit had the benefit of voicing the puritan disapproval of the Christmas celebration. In the span of five days Dowsing visited most of the severe Laudian offenders.

On 23 December Dowsing was once again at Peterhouse, just across the street from Pembroke College. No doubt the Fellows of Pembroke knew very well what had occurred in Peterhouse during Dowsing's visitation. Thus, when Dowsing crossed Trumpington Street on 26 December they were ready to voice their indignation. The academics of Pembroke were going to test the yeoman from Suffolk. They would call upon him to defend his actions from Scripture, history and the laws of Parliament.

IV. The Ad Hoc Disputation: Theologies Clash at Pembroke College, Cambridge

Pembroke College had the distinction of receiving some of the earliest Laudian 'improvements'. The college was already sympathetic to the principles on which Laudianism stood after years of association with anti-Calvinists such as Lancelot Andrews.²⁷ Therefore it was not surprising that the Pembroke chapel bore noticeably Laudian markings by the early 1630s.²⁸ Consequently, it made a prime target for literal and symbolic cleansing. Dowsing recorded events which transpired at Pembroke College in the second entry in his journal. He began the entry by listing the Fellows who were present, 'Mr. Weeden, Mr. Maphthorpe, and Mr. Sterne, and Mr. Quarles, and Mr. Felton'. At some point, Edmund Boldero came on the scene and added to the resistance. Boldero was another man of Suffolk, but had taken on decidedly different sympathies to the iconoclast. Boldero received all of his training from Pembroke

²⁷ Peter Lake, *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, C. 1560-1660* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), p. 17.

²⁸ For Trevor Cooper's comments on the state of the Pembroke chapel upon Dowsing's arrival see *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 160.

College and emerged as an ardent defender of Archbishop Laud.²⁹ His sympathies were indicative of the Fellows to his right and left. Although Dowsing and Boldero may have been speaking with similar accents, the iconoclast and the Fellow represented the great divide running through the country in the 1640s.

The first line of Dowsing's entry also recorded that he and his companions 'broak 10 cherubims'. After they had broken an additional '80 superstitious pictures', the Fellows began to challenge the legitimacy of what they witnessed. The subsequent exchange is the most theologically revealing passage in the journal. It shows that Dowsing was fully aware of scriptural, historical and legal precedents in his favour. In her examination of these arguments, S.L. Sadler concluded,

A yeoman and soldier had challenged the learned men of the University. What is more he had challenged them in their own arena, both physically and intellectually, and in doing so he challenged established channels of social order as well as spiritual ones.³⁰

The disputation was not recorded by an objective third party. Dowsing wrote down what he remembered of the arguments after the fact. It is possible that during the clash he did not have his references as readily at hand as the journal suggests (since he managed to include page numbers). Dowsing may have taken the opportunity to edit the portions which did not go well. The fact that he overwhelmed the Fellows' arguments at every turn makes this likely. For example, after one of Dowsing's sharper rejoinders he recorded that the Fellows, 'stared one on another without answer'.³¹ Of course it is also possible that the events occurred exactly as Dowsing relayed them. Perhaps some of his associates helped him recall the details. Whatever

²⁹ S. L. Sadler, "Boldero, Edmund (1609–1679)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2792> (accessed 23 February 2009). Boldero's commitment to the established church became more evident when he co-authored a tract that attempted to undermine England's Solemn League and Covenant with Scotland.

³⁰ Sadler, "Dowsing's Arguments with the Fellows of Pembroke," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 63.

³¹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 161, entry 2.

the precise history behind the composition of Dowsing's record, these were the arguments he used to justify iconoclasm to himself even if he did not convince the Fellows. Since this thesis is primarily concerned with Dowsing's understanding of the theology he was applying, his recollection of the arguments serves the present chapter well.

The match started simply enough. Dowsing gave the invitation by destroying a host of angels and Mr. Weeden accepted the challenge by declaring that he could 'fetch a Statute Book to shew that pictures were not to be pulled down'.³² The Fellows were sizing up Dowsing's rhetorical swordsmanship. Dowsing confidently 'bad[e] him fetch and shew it and they [the images] should stand'. Since it does not appear that Weeden left to fetch the book during the entire conversation, Dowsing successfully parried the opening lunge. Boldero came to assist Weeden with a sharper argument saying 'the clargie had only to doe in ecclesiastical matters, neither the Magistrate, nor the Parliament had any thing to doe'. In response, Dowsing attempted a cut by citing a name. He said their arguments were born of '[John] Cosin's judgement'. Parliament had effectively removed Cosin from Peterhouse in 1643, although it was not official until March 1644. In addition to his extreme Laudianism, Cosin also maintained a sharp distinction between civil and ecclesiastical authority.³³ His name would have reminded the Fellows of the dangers of angering Parliament. Dowsing had them on their heels.

Dowsing next set out to prove that 'people had to doe as well as the clergie'. In other words he was attempting to show that Parliament had a voice in these matters and his actions were consequently justified. He used a case study from Acts 1 as his first line of argument. He specifically cited 'Acts i. 15, 16, 23' with a parenthetical citing of 'Calv. On Acts i'. This

³² For this section on the debate, all quotations from journal entry 2 will come from *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 161-162 and will therefore not receive individual citations. Quotations from other sources will receive due citation.

³³ Milton, "Cosin, John (1595–1672)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

section of Scripture recounts the moment when the Apostles addressed the nascent church (the 120 believers) with the need to replace Judas Iscariot. Judas' betrayal of Jesus and later suicide created a crisis among the eleven apostles. Jesus had selected the original Twelve. How would they fill a vacancy since Christ no longer walked among them? In verse 15, Peter (the 'clergy') puts the problem before the church (the 'people'). Peter concluded that they needed another man who could be 'a witness with us of his resurrection'. Then Acts 1:23 says 'they' put forward two people, Joseph and Matthias. The assembly cast lots and the lot fell to Matthias. Matthias was 'added to the eleven apostles'. In essence, Dowsing argued that the laity was called upon to make a significant ecclesiastical decision. That precedent made it possible for 'the people' to affect ecclesiastical policy. The problem for Dowsing's case is that in the episode he cited, the people did not make the final decision. The use of 'lots' indicated the apostles' desire for the decision to come from the Lord himself (Acts 1:24; Proverbs 16:33). Divine approval seemed more important than human 'participation', since apostleship did not come from man but God. Nevertheless, the text does involve human agency in the providential choice of Matthias, so Dowsing's argument for the role of 'the people' in ecclesiastical affairs is not without merit.

Dowsing did not rely solely on his own interpretation of Acts. He called on Calvin for support. But the text of Calvin's commentary on Acts reveals a similar problem for Dowsing's argument: 'Christ had appointed the others with his own voice; if Matthias had been adopted into their ranks by the choice of men alone, his authority would have been less than theirs'.³⁴

Dowsing also cited 'Calvin, and in his Institutions, in the point of ministers elections'. Calvin clarifies that the use of lots in the 'election' of Matthias was unique. He further affirmed that

ministers are legitimately called according to the word of God, when those who may have seemed fit are elected on the consent and approbation of the people. Other pastors,

³⁴ John Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., Calvin's Commentaries (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), p. 45.

however, ought to preside over the election, lest any error should be committed by the general body either through levity, or bad passion, or tumult.³⁵

Here Calvin does support the essence of Dowsing's claim: that laity had authority to speak on ecclesiastical matters. The case is sustainable elsewhere in scripture, but Dowsing mounted his case on a difficult passage.

As for Boldero's claim that Magistrates had no place in church matters, Dowsing went immediately to 'Josiah's reforming religion' (mistakenly citing I Kings instead of II Kings) and 'other godly reforming Kings of Judah'. Josiah was the favourite Judean King among iconoclasts because of the repudiation of idolatry which occurred in his reign. In the mid-sixteenth century Reformers drew numerous parallels between Josiah and the young King Edward VI because images were under the ban during his reign.³⁶ Sadler rightly summarizes the weight of the 'Josiah' image in the early 1640s:

The example of King Josiah may have held a particular resonance in the early 1640s, as it was the people, not their ruler, who showed loyalty to God and the true way, and who raised up Josiah to be king: 'the people of the land made Josiah his son king in [Amon's] stead'. The people's intervention was vindicated by Josiah's rule, which led to a renewed Covenant with the Lord.³⁷

Dowsing noted that his reference to Josiah seemed to 'prove it' (his case). But Dowsing was also eager to bypass the civil/ecclesiastical tension in favour of the more germane topic of the images themselves.

Dowsing's next line of attack involved two Elizabethan documents. The first was "An Homily Against Peril of Idolatry and Superfluous Decking of Churches".³⁸ The second was

³⁵ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.3.15, p. 70.

³⁶ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, pp. 19ff. See also Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*.

³⁷ Sadler, "Dowsing's Arguments with the Fellows of Pembroke," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper p. 59.

³⁸ Citations from a seventeenth century edition. See "An Homily on Peril of Idolatry and Superfluous Decking of Churches," *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen*

Elizabeth I's 1559 injunctions against the use of images. The most likely reason that Dowsing cited these texts was because he knew that they were meant to be accepted by the Fellows. In Dowsing's words, these were the documents 'which they so much honoured'. Dowsing aimed to secure a decisive win by citing the Fellows' own sources of authority. If there had been real swords at work, this move would have amounted to a 'changement de rythme'. The 'back and forth' of the match changed with Dowsing's more aggressive movements. Dowsing decided to stop the inquisition by providing answers not yet requested.

The sixteenth century homily on the "Peril of Idolatry" lamented the 'Corruption of these later days', referring to the Marian return to Catholicism. The recent 'Corruption' had 'brought into the church Infinite multitudes of images'.³⁹ The crucial argument in the homily was that 'images' and 'idols' were interchangeable terms. No one in the Christian tradition would openly embrace 'idols'. Indeed, the most ardent iconodule would vehemently oppose 'idolatry' while defending the use of 'images'. The Book of Homilies linked the two terms so that the two concepts became one. Thereafter, if a 'papist' defended the use of 'images', puritans only heard a defence of 'idols'. Dowsing brought this reasoning to bear on the Fellows of Pembroke. Dowsing wrote, 'as for the taking down of images I told them that the Book of Homilys did prove it' and then 'alleged p. 12, 13, 14, 15, and 23' as the strongest support for iconoclasm in the homily. The twelfth page of the homily strongly supports Dowsing's claim: 'Therefore God by his Word, as he forbiddeth any Idols or Images to be made or set up, so does he command such as we find made and set up to be pulled down, broken, and destroyed'.⁴⁰ The same page included the outright claim (from Numbers 23) that 'the true Israelites, that is the People of God,

Elizabeth of Famous Memory and Now Reprinted for the Use of Private Families, in Two Parts, (London: Printed for George Wells, Abel Swall and George Pawlett., 1687), pp. 175ff.

³⁹ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 176.

⁴⁰ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 186.

had no Images among them ... God was with them and that therefore their Enemies cannot hurt them'. The text of the homily carefully avoided a call for 'private' iconoclasm: it claimed this duty rested with the magistrate. Since Dowsing operated under the sponsorship of Parliament he probably felt certain that he upheld this stipulation as well. The thirteenth page of the homily added more strength to Dowsing's growing list of citations:

And if any, contrary to the Commandment of the Lord, will needs set up such altars or Images, or suffer them undestroyed amongst them; the Lord himself threateneth in the first chapter of the Book of Numbers, and by his Holy Prophets Ezekiel, Micheas, and Abakuk, that he will come himself and pull them down. And how he will handle, punish and destroy the People that so set up, *or* suffer such Altars, Images, or Idols undestroyed he denounceth by his prophet Ezekiel on this matter.⁴¹

Note that the threat of divine wrath affected not only those who 'set up' the idols/images, but also those who 'suffered' the images to remain 'undestroyed'.

Dowsing next cited pages fourteen and fifteen, which continue along the same trajectory: 'idol' and 'image' were synonymous. However, these pages show the length that 'true' believers must go to separate themselves from idolaters (iconodules), including a protracted tour of New Testament passages which highlight the perils of image-worship. I Corinthians 5 forbids anyone to 'keep company, or to eat and drink with any called Brethren or Christians, that do Worship images'. Galatians 5 numbers the 'Worshipping of Images' among the 'Works of the Flesh'. I Corinthians 10 calls image worship 'service of Devils'. I Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5 both declare that 'such Image-Worshippers shall never come into the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven'. The Apostle John warns Christians to 'beware of Images'. Therefore, 'in sundry places is threatened, that the wrath of God shall come upon such'.⁴²

⁴¹ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, pp. 186-187. Quotations like this raise the question of the puritan conception of God's retribution on his own people: For further discussion of this issue as it arises in Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons see Chapter Six.

⁴² *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 186. Here we cite the homily's paraphrase of these verses, not the verses themselves. Much of the homily writer's interpretation seems to have emerged from the use of paraphrase.

One potential objection to the homily's teaching relates to the interpreter's method. Simply choosing to define 'idols' as 'images' and then supplying the word 'image' in every passage that mentions 'idols' may not be a convincing strategy. Yet, there is some merit to the interpretation. For example, the homily cites 1 John 5:21, 'Little ones, keep yourselves from idols'. Here the Greek term for 'idols' is 'των εἰδώλων', which simply means the image or likeness of anything. It is the same word used in the Septuagint in the second commandment's prohibition of a graven 'image' (εἰδώλον). John was likely referring to specific 'idols' of foreign gods, but since those foreign gods were worshipped according to their 'likenesses' in stone or wood, then it may be that he simply said 'Keep yourselves from images'. The homily presumes this interpretation, as does Dowsing.⁴³

The final page which Dowsing listed from the "Peril of Idolatry" is '23'. Here the unknown writer of the homily shifts tactics and appeals to the authorities from the history of the church. The page mainly deals with the writing of Epiphanius, a fourth century Jewish convert to Christianity. Epiphanius wrote against the use of images in the churches. The homily asserts that many Catholic writers tried to discredit Epiphanius because, hailing from the Jews, he was an 'Enemy of Images'.⁴⁴ The text counters this argument by alleging that 'Gentiles' introduced images into the church and they are therefore not consistent with God's original design for worship. Dowsing seems to have cited this page because it demonstrates that opposition to images had a long history. It also shows Catholic iconophiles using questionable means to discredit iconoclasts.

After exhausting "Peril of Idolatry" Dowsing made a cursory reference to 'The Queens Injunctions'. This is an interesting reference for a couple of reasons. First, it shows once more

⁴³ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 178.

⁴⁴ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 197.

that Dowsing was keenly aware of historic documents relating to images. Second, Queen Elizabeth I's injunctions against images (1559) were actually attempts to moderate the injunctions made during Edward VI's reign (1547). As William Haugaard observed, 'Of the three Edwardian injunctions on images, Elizabeth omitted the most crucial and slightly altered the other two'.⁴⁵ Edward's injunctions included a regulation 'ordering the removal of any [image] which had given occasion to idolatry of any sort'.⁴⁶ Elizabeth left this regulation out of her injunctions on images. Her adjustments to the two other injunctions were minor, but crafted to create loopholes. One Edwardian injunction declared that clergy 'shall not set forth nor extol any image'. Elizabeth moderated the wording by ordering that the clergy 'shall not set forth or extol the dignity of any images ... but [declare] the abuse of the same'.⁴⁷ Dowsing's mention of the injunctions carried weight even if Elizabeth restrained Edward's earlier version. They still spoke against images as dangers to the church and allowed for them to be pulled down in certain circumstances. Dowsing linked Queen Elizabeth with the recent actions of Parliament and forced the Fellows to change tactics once again.

According to Dowsing's account, the Fellows made two further allegations which they believed made images legitimate. First they pronounced 'cherubims to be lawful by Scripture' citing Deuteronomy 4:12,16; 7:5, 25, 26; and 12:2. Second they claimed that 'Moses and Solomon made [images] without command'. Dowsing did not answer the Deuteronomy claims specifically, but showed that the images Moses made resulted from a clear command from God in Exodus 25:18, 'And make two cherubim out of hammered gold'. The Fellows pounced on Solomon's images, hoping to prove that wise men use images in worship without a direct

⁴⁵ William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation: The Struggle for a Stable Settlement of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 140.

⁴⁶ Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation*, p. 141. See also Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm," pp. 17-18.

⁴⁷ Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation*, p. 141.

command from God. Dowsing was ready for this. He said that Solomon received 'a pattern from David', who received it from God (I Chronicles 28:10, 11-19).

The next exchange is almost comical. Growing frustrated with Dowsing's incessant citations, Mr Weeden said, 'Reading Paul's sermons was better preaching than now is used, because it was not script[ural]'. In other words, Weeden charged that the 'puritan' plain style method of preaching was not found in scripture. This exchange may not follow immediately from the previous material; it could have been a side argument. However, it was memorable enough for Dowsing to record. Weeden suggested that preachers within the Church of England return to simply reading the words of Paul. In characteristic puritan fashion, Dowsing responded with a verse:

I told them God saved by foolishness of preaching, not reading, and alleged, I Cor. 1.21; I told them, if reading was preaching, my child preaches as well as they, and they stared one on another without answer.

The debate over preaching seems to have been an odd little interlude between acts. The next line of the entry reads, 'More, Pembroke Hall' as though he added this in after recording the first round of the debate. In another attempt to undermine Parliament and Dowsing's commission, a 'Mr. Ashton' asserted that 'Laws made in time of war were not of force'. In an impressive move Dowsing cited the 'Magna Charta, made in the time of war, between Henry the Third and barrons, that was in force still, and Richard the 2d's tyme the like'. The Fellows countered by pointing out that since the king and many members of Parliament were 'away' this made parliamentary actions invalid. Dowsing's response was two-fold: 'I told them, their own practice proved it, th[ey] chose Fellows by the greater number present; and that the king had taken an oath to seal what both Houses voted'. The essence of the first part of Dowsing's response was that since the king and parliamentarians were 'away' then the Parliament was left

with no recourse but to act as it saw fit. They could not wait for the king to be present, anymore than the Fellows would wait for estranged members of the college to appear before choosing a Fellow. Dowsing added that the king was under oath to ratify what the Houses passed, even if it offended the king's religious sensibilities.

The debate came to an abrupt end. Mr. Maplethorpe insisted that Dowsing's commission was invalid. Dowsing recorded no response, although in the coming months Manchester would issue a new commission that gave Dowsing the right to arrest anyone who made such charges. The supplementary commission added to the unique nature of Dowsing's position. As John Morrill has argued, 'Dowsing was unique. In no other part of England was anyone appointed systematically to carry out the work that the ordinances laid squarely on the shoulders.'⁴⁸ But for the time being, the Fellows began making 'threatening speches' and Dowsing went about his business.

The debate with the Fellows of Pembroke clarifies Dowsing's own understanding of the complex theological and political issues that faced English Christians in the 1640s. Dowsing justified his iconoclastic campaign as a scripturally sound response to errors in the church. He relied on Calvin's defence of the laity's involvement in ecclesiastical decisions to defend his commission from Manchester. He employed arguments from Elizabethan homilies and injunctions to demonstrate that, from the perspective of puritans like Dowsing, images were unacceptable in Christian worship. He countered the Fellows' citation of acceptable images in Scripture by appealing to the context of their chosen texts, arguing that their examples actually testified against the use of images in worship.

⁴⁸ John Morrill, "A Liberation Theology? Aspects of Puritanism in the English Revolution," *Puritanism and Its Discontents*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), p. 36.

As in most debates, neither side showed even the slightest change in position. Each side stated their prepared ideas and parted a little worse for wear. Dowsing held his ground but the victory was not overwhelming. No one landed a crushing blow. The unknown Suffolk layman brought his knowledge of Scripture, English history, church history and jurisprudence to bear against a group of formidable opponents. The debate was also a compelling microcosm of national events. The arguments posited by both sides in this small conflict were writ large over all of England in the 1640s when both sides were struggling for the soul of the nation. In his own private study, Dowsing had grappled with what the reform of worship would require and he emerged a thoroughly convinced iconoclast.

Convinced as he may have been, the Fellows' 'threatening speeches' apparently had an effect on the iconoclast. Three days after the encounter at Pembroke, Manchester signed another commission designed

to authorise and require [Dowsing] to bring before [Manchester] all such heads of Colledges Deanes or Subdeanes ... or persons as shall oppose or contemne you ... in the execut[ion] of the ordinance of Parlia[men]t ... or that shall utter disgracefull speeches against any of the members of Parlia[men]t.⁴⁹

Dowsing evidently needed assurance after an unexpected challenge and Manchester needed to reassert his perceived 'right' to enforce the ordinance of 1643.

V. The Campaign from a Theological Perspective: Patterns and Principles

The principles and arguments which Dowsing set forth at Pembroke drove him through the rest of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. His arguments with the Pembroke Fellows show that, at the very least, his iconoclastic campaign was not a series of mindless acts. The items which he destroyed reflected a set of Reformed priorities. The purpose of this section is to identify

⁴⁹ Cooper, "Dowsing's Commissions from the Earl of Manchester," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 350.

patterns in the actual destruction and link those patterns to theological convictions. Trevor Cooper's investigation into Dowsing's campaign focused on what he destroyed and where and when the destruction occurred. The remainder of this chapter relies on Cooper's findings but focuses on why these items were so offensive to Dowsing and Parliament.

Some of the 'offensive' items remained from pre-Reformation Catholicism, while others entered the scene under Laud's influence in the 1630s. Taken together, two types of material dominate Dowsing's account of iconoclasm in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. They fall into categories of image or inscription. Clearly, the image group included the 'superstitious' or 'popish' pictures which filled the chapels and churches. These are the representations which constituted a clear breach of the second commandment from the Reformed perspective. This category included statues (wood or stone), stained glass and paintings. Dowsing's recorded visit to 'Peter's parish' in Sudbury, Suffolk on 9 January 1643/4 illustrates this:

We brake down a picture of God the Father, 2 crucifixes, & pictures of Christ, about an hundred in all; and gave order to take down a cross off the steeple; and diverse angels, 20 at least, on the roof of the church.⁵⁰

Crucifixes represented more than a violation of the second commandment. In 1641 John Vicars published a work condemning images of Christ which also contained an essay against crucifixes by William Prynn.⁵¹ Both works demonstrated the general uneasiness with

⁵⁰ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 212, entry 39. Commenting on this entry, Cooper writes: 'Here, as always, Dowsing distinguished between what *he* does to images – "brake down"—and what he orders *others* to do – "take down". This might just reflect the turn of a phrase, but it may perhaps be a careful sticking to the letter of the law, which ordered offensive images to be "taken away" or "removed" rather than broken'. One addition is necessary: the ordinance of 1643 stipulated that these images were to be 'taken away *and defaced*' which could suggest that they were to be rendered unusable, or destroyed.

⁵¹ John Vicars, *The Sinfulness and Unlawfulness, of Having or Making the Picture of Christs Humanity Set Forth in a Succint and Plain Discourse, and the Main and Most Vulgar Reasons and Objections against This Truth, Clearly Evinc'd and Refuted / by John Vicars; Whereunto Is Annexed a Sweet and Solid Essay or Epigram in Verse, against Crucifixes and Pictures of Christ, by That Most Eminently Pious and Faithfull Servant of Christ, M. William Prinne* (London: Printed by M.F. for John Bartlet, 1641).

crucifixes among the Reformed. The problem was not only Christ's image, but that he was still depicted as suffering on the cross. The crucifix had long been associated with the Catholic mass and the ongoing 'sacrifice' of Christ. Since it was alleged that Laudian 'altars' heralded a return to the Catholic mass, crucifixes seemed even more dangerous in Reformed eyes. But Dowsing did not only remove 'crucifixes'. He also removed simple 'crosses'. The idea was that even an unadorned cross could invite superstition and was dangerous for God's people.⁵²

The parliamentary ordinance ordered depictions of 'any person of the Trinity' to be destroyed. Dowsing took great care to record instances when images of persons of the Trinity were present in churches or chapels. At Little St. Mary's church in Cambridge, he noted the striking feature of 'God the Father sitting in a chayer, and holding a globe in his hand'.⁵³ In Glemsford, Suffolk Dowsing remarked, 'We brake down many pictures; one of God the Father. A picture of the Holy Ghost in Brass'.⁵⁴ In one visit to a private chapel Dowsing stumbled upon all three persons of the Trinity:

Feb 3 [1643/4] We were at the Lady Bruce's House, and in her chapel [Little Wenhem Hall chapel] there was a picture of God the Father, of the Trinity, of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the cloven tongues; which we gave order to take down, and the Lady promised to do it.⁵⁵

Reformed opposition to images of persons of the Trinity was long-standing. An early articulation of this Reformed attitude came from the pen of George Abbot (1562-1633). Abbot was not a 'puritan' but in 1600 this future Archbishop of Canterbury took up the issue of Trinitarian imagery in a tract criticising the beautification of Cheapside Cross, a time-honoured

⁵² For examples of crucifix removal throughout the campaign see entries 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 46, 50, 154, 213, 220, and 273. For examples of the removal of simple crosses see entries 9, 13, 34, 39, 52, 53, 57, 61, 65, 201, and 202.

⁵³ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 192, entry 20.

⁵⁴ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 249, entry 123.

⁵⁵ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 238, entry 100. There were many times when Dowsing, perhaps pressed for time, left orders for things to be remedied. Cooper indicated that the evidence shows that the 'Lady Bruce' did not follow all of Dowsing's orders. For other examples of Dowsing leaving instructions see entries 45 and 88.

testament to ‘popery’ in London. Abbot set out to show that images of any person of the Trinity were unscriptural and ‘popish’. He argued that it was widely accepted that images of God the Father and the Holy Spirit were anathema, because even ‘as the Damascene [an iconodule] saith, it is a point of the highest folly or impiety to figure that which is divine’. But Abbot countered the Damascene’s next argument which asserted that ‘because God in the new Testament is made man, he may be adored with the bodily Image of himself’.⁵⁶ Abbot did not reply to that specific assertion but summarized a system of thought which rendered images of Christ ‘gross’ and unnecessary. Abbot’s full response captures the Reformed ethos concerning images of Christ:

First, the wisdom of God, which directed us to all things fit for our salvation, hath given not the least touch nor semblance, directly or by consequence, of any such matter, which might serve to direct us unto Piety: but hath only appointed the Word to be the measure thereof, and the Sacraments which are visibly (but not so grossly as the Crucifix) presented unto us as resemblances of Christs passion.

Secondly, it implyeth great weaknesse of faith when we cannot think of our Saviour, either by Meditation, or Prayer, or reading, or hearing the word, or by receiving of the Sacraments, but wee must flie unto such means, as for the use whereof wee have no warrant, but on the other side there is much danger, lest inconveniences should grow thereby.

Thirdly, it was a very ready way unto Superstition, which from a small beginning creepeth on, neither hath it any way more increase then in Images, as the Church by lamentable experience hath too much proved. Images (saith Cyprian) at first were made in honour of them that were dead, but afterwards they became sacred to their posterity, & were at first taken only for comforts, this was true among the Heathen, and so it was among the Christians, who at first made them, but offered not to bring them into Churches, yet within a while that also was attempted, but to the great grieve and indignation of the godly.⁵⁷

The parliamentary ordinance of 1643 embodied this rationale with its call to eradicate

‘monuments of superstition’.⁵⁸ Likewise, Dowsing’s journal contains documentation of his

⁵⁶ George Abbot, *Cheap-Side Crosse Censured and Condemned by a Letter Sent from the Vicechancellour and Other Learned Men of the Famous Vniversitie of Oxford in Answer to a Question Propounded by the Citizens of London, Concerning the Said Crosse, in the Yeere 1600, in Which Yeer It Was Beautified: As Also a Remarkable Passage to the Same Purpose, in a Sermon Preached to an Eminent and Very Great Auditory in This City of London / by a Very Reverend, Holy, and Learned Divine, a While after the Crosse Was Last Repaired, Which Was Anno 1606* (London: Printed by A.N. for I.R., and are to be sold at his shop, 1641), p. 5.

⁵⁷ Abbot, *Cheap-Side Crosse Censured and Condemned*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁸ *An Ordinance for the Utter Demolishing* (1643).

attempts to reconcile the churches with this standard in worship. Simple crosses were ways for superstition to creep in to the piety of the laity. Crucifixes depicted what the sacraments were meant to show. Visions of persons of the Trinity were impediments, rather than aids, to piety. The removal of these objects was not just a priority for Dowsing but for the entire Reformed community he represented.

Inscriptions make up the second major category of material in the journal. The inscriptions actually represent two points of controversy for the Reformed: the dead praying for the living and the living praying for the dead. When Dowsing visited Katharine Hall, Cambridge (26 December, 1643) he came across an inscription which read, 'Ora pro anima, qui fecit hanc fenestram'. Dowsing translates, 'Pray for the soul of him who made this window'.⁵⁹ He 'broake down' these words along with an image of John the Baptist. Instances of the '*Ora pro anima*' abound in the journal.⁶⁰ Dowsing's problem with this inscription is that it called the believer to pray for a soul whose fate had already been determined after death. The inscription denoted a purgatory from which the souls of the dead could find release through the faithful prayers of parishioners.

Another common inscription in the journal is 'Ora[te] pro nobis' (Pray for us). Rather than the living praying for the dead, this phrase called on the dead to pray for the living. The 'Ora pro nobis' was an integral refrain in the Catholic Litany of the Saints in which deceased saints and martyrs were asked to pray for those still living. From the Reformed perspective, this phrase had no place whatsoever in places of worship. In a work published in 1645 Peter Heylyn showed that part of the historic reform movement in England involved replacing the 'Ora pro

⁵⁹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 166, entry 5.

⁶⁰ For examples of their removal see entries 10, 18, 36, 41, 48, 50, 58, 73, 79, 81, 89, 92, 102, 112, 135, 136, 170, 174, 204, 207, 217, 239, 243, 259 and 269.

nobis' with a more Protestant phrase 'Parce nobis Domine' (Have mercy on us, Lord).⁶¹ But Dowsing does not seek to replace this inscription with a less offensive line. In fact, the content of the inscriptions was a secondary issue. Apparently, all 'ingravings' were inherently offensive. Dowsing etched through the seemingly tame phrases 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus' and 'Gloria Dei & Gloria Patri' during his visit to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.⁶² This may have been because the inscriptions added a sense that the chapel was a special holy place because of the 'altar' it contained. Also, the Parliament sought not only to rid the churches of popery, but also anything that might invite 'superstition'. This was especially true for such phrases as 'O Mater Dei, memento mei' and 'Sancta Maria' which recognized Mary as a special mediator in prayer.⁶³ Even if they did not rise to that level of offense, to Dowsing all inscriptions were part of a superstitious system scheduled for eradication.⁶⁴

Miscellaneous items are dispersed throughout the journal. Dowsing's encounters demonstrate that he had theological interests broader than the regulative principle. At Benet College (which needed no cleansing) Dowsing took interest in the use of the word 'temple' to describe a place of worship. The word apparently conjured 'old covenant' implications for the iconoclast as he jots 'I Sam. i. 9' in the entry.⁶⁵ The rector informed him that French Huguenots regularly used the term 'templum' rather than 'ecclesia' to indicate a place of worship. Dowsing was satisfied. He also recorded disapproval of local clergy at times. He noted that the vicar of

⁶¹ Peter Heylyn, *Parliaments Power in Lawes for Religion, or, an Answer to That Old and Groundles [Sic] Calumny of the Papists, Nick-Naming the Religion of the Church of England, by the Name of a Parliamentary-Religion Sent to a Friend Who Was Troubled at It, and Earnestly Desired Satisfaction in It* (Oxford: Printed by Henry Hall, 1645), p. 28.

⁶² Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 156, entry 1.

⁶³ Dowsing encountered these inscriptions in Barham and Somersham, Suffolk. Dowsing mistranslated 'O Mater Dei, memento mei' as 'O Mother of God, have mercy on me!' when it reads 'O Mother of God, remember me'. See *The Journal of William Dowsing*, p. 218, entry 51.

⁶⁴ Other common inscriptions which Dowsing eliminated were: 'Quorum animabus propitiatur deus' (e.g., entries 93, 120, 128, 161) and 'Cujus animae propitiatur deus' (e.g., entries 12, 95, 102, 139, 170, 177, 184, 194, 207, and 217) both of which carrying the meaning 'whose soul(s) God pardons'.

⁶⁵ I Samuel 1:9 reads, 'and Eli the Priest sate upon a stool by one of the posts of the Temple of the Lord'. See Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 167-168, entry 6.

Brundish, Suffolk ‘had two livings’.⁶⁶ Later he remarked that a parson named ‘Mr. Barneby’ in Redsham Magna, Suffolk ‘preached but once a day’.⁶⁷ These events show that the iconoclast had his eyes on more than outlawed images.

Images of persons of the Trinity were not the only representations which received a great deal of attention from Dowsing. He did not overlook depictions of saints and other historical figures. It might seem that Dowsing diverted from Calvin’s position since Calvin accepted images depicting historical events. This is only partly true. Calvin clarified that he did not approve of representations of historical figures when they were divorced from an event.⁶⁸ This means a painting of Stephen’s martyrdom would be permissible in some cases, but a solitary statue of Stephen would not. Dowsing does not make that distinction. He simply removed historical figures regardless of any event that might surround them.

Some historical figures were particularly odious. One recurring character was St. Catherine of Alexandria, always pictured with her wheel. ‘Catherine and her wheel’ represented all that puritans believed to be wrong with medieval superstition and popery in general. Catherine was a fourth century martyr whose life-story ran from one mythical event to the next. Legend has it that after her conversion the Spirit ‘transported’ her to heaven whereupon the Virgin Mary betrothed her to Jesus. She then suffered under the persecution of Emperor Maximinus whom she embarrassed by trouncing him in a debate. The Emperor ordered that she should be tortured on ‘the crushing wheel’. When she touched the wheel, it was miraculously destroyed. After a prompt beheading, angels purportedly carried her body away to Mount Sinai where monks built a church in her honour. She was also believed to be one of the ‘heavenly

⁶⁶ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 287, entry 213.

⁶⁷ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 290, entry 220.

⁶⁸ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.11.12., p. 112.

helpers' who counselled Joan of Arc.⁶⁹ The offense to Dowsing's sensibilities needs no explanation. Dowsing recorded that he removed her image from Nettetstead, Suffolk on 22 August 1644.⁷⁰ Dowsing found another 'Catherine' the day before in Barking, Suffolk and all evidence indicates this was removed. Another instance was in Wrentham where Dowsing successfully removed all traces of Catherine and her wheel.⁷¹

The list of casualties is long. Dowsing consistently removed Peter with his keys, other Apostles, Evangelists, Joseph, Adam and Eve, Abraham, the Twelve Patriarchs, Moses and Aaron, the Prophets, the Church Fathers, and of course the Virgin Mary. He removed angels, cherubim, cloven tongues, crowns of thorns, depictions of the deadly sins, 'friars hugging a nun', the ladder of Christ, and even the 'sun and moon'. In Brinkley he removed depictions of saintly acts such as 'St. Christopher carrying Christ'.⁷² His was an attempt at wholesale cleansing of any external biblical imagery as well as the cult of saints. Dowsing lived out the regulative principle in these stunning acts of kinetic Puritanism and active theology. He removed what he

⁶⁹ See "St. Catherine of Alexandria," *The Catholic Encyclopaedia Online*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03445a.htm> (accessed 8 May 2008).

⁷⁰ Trevor Cooper discovered that the image remained undamaged. This raises the question of how precisely Dowsing's orders were carried out by churchwardens and/or deputies. In this case, Dowsing does not say that he ordered it to be removed; the entry indicates that he removed it himself. Perhaps this was Dowsing's way of saying he was certain those in charge would remove Catherine's image. Regardless of what Dowsing asserted, Cooper's findings show that the image remains intact in spite of Dowsing's positive claim of destruction. See Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 307, entry 249.

⁷¹ Dowsing, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 307ff, entries 249, 254 and 264. The rector of Wrentham was John Phillip, a minister with puritan sympathies who had avoided pressure from Matthew Wren's visitations by escaping to New England in the 1630s. Susan Hardman Moore noted that Phillip began his journey home to Wrentham just 'three months after the House of Commons voted Bishop Matthew Wren unfit for office – [he] set off as soon as this news crossed the Atlantic'. See Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home*, pp. 63-64. Although Phillip would have likely supported Dowsing's actions, it should be noted that Phillip had been rector at Wrentham since 1609 and the images remained untouched until Dowsing's campaign in 1643-44.

⁷² Christopher was a fourth century martyr alleged to have carried an infant across a body of water only to discover that he was carrying the Christ child. As he carried him the child grew heavier, teaching Christopher that he carried the weight of the world. The legend is recounted in the National Gallery of Scotland beneath Orazio Borgianni's rendering of the event. See http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/online_search/4:324/result/0/4689 (accessed 8 May 2008).

believed to be forbidden images and discredited ideas from places of worship, so that people would focus on God through the preached Word and spiritual worship.

The record of Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign comes to an abrupt end with the entry dated 1 October 1644. The final account records Dowsing's visit to Parham Hacheston in Suffolk.⁷³ The exact reason for Dowsing terminating his efforts to remove idolatry is unclear. Parliament issued no order to stop enforcing the ordinances of 1641, 1643 or 1644. Likewise, neither of Manchester's commissions to Dowsing restricted iconoclasm to a certain time period. The answer might be found in the relationship between the Earl of Manchester and the House of Commons which became strained in the late summer of 1644. Following a courageous performance at the battle of Marston Moor on 2 July Manchester began to lose enthusiasm for the war effort. The brutalities he witnessed caused him to assert that 'this was not the way to advance religion'.⁷⁴ As a result, factions were beginning to form in the Eastern Association Army under Manchester's leadership. In October 1644 (when Dowsing's records stop) Oliver Cromwell began a political attack on Manchester in the House of Commons, 'demanding his removal as the commander-in-chief of the Eastern Association'.⁷⁵ Manchester's waning political stature might have caused Dowsing to question the power of his commanding officer to authorize the campaign and to protect the iconoclast.

⁷³ This entry is numbered 272. The following entry, 273, is a duplicate of entry 118 which records Thomas Umberfield's (of Stoke) refusal to pay a fine of 6s. 8d. For a discussion of this entry, see Cooper, "History and Nature of the Journal," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, pp. 144-145.

⁷⁴ Ian J. Gentles, "Montagu, Edward, second earl of Manchester (1602-1671)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19009> (accessed 9 December 2009).

⁷⁵ Gentles, "Montagu, Edward, second earl of Manchester (1602-1671)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

VI. Conclusion

Dowsing's journal went beyond recording what he did and where he visited. To a certain extent the journal also records his rationale for iconoclasm and the kinds of items that were priorities for him. Items he removed from churches and chapels reveal a recurring set of priorities, shaped first by Scripture and then by the ordinance of Parliament. The texts he cited at the beginning of the journal show that Dowsing perceived his iconoclasm to be a moral obligation drawn directly from God's special revelation. The law of God demanded obedience and God would execute justice unless Dowsing executed the idols. The parliamentary ordinance embodied these Scriptural concerns and set the boundaries for their application. Dowsing held a broad understanding of the implications of his actions. While debating the Fellows of Pembroke College he showed a mature understanding of English history, church history, Scripture and the laws of the land. These arguments sustained him in the ensuing campaign throughout Cambridgeshire and Suffolk.

This chapter examined what Dowsing wrote in the journal as a key to understanding his rationale for what he did. However, for Dowsing the more telling piece of the puzzle comes from what he read before and during his iconoclastic campaign. The remainder of this project examines Dowsing's reading habits and culminates in a thematic analysis of his collection of parliamentary fast sermons. The way Dowsing read this material shows his intention to believe the preachers' 'doctrines' and apply their 'uses'. The sermons reveal a case of conscience that Dowsing simply had to address.

Chapter 5

‘May the Lord Give You Understanding’: Dowsing, the Reader

I. Dowsing and the Book

Books have a history of inciting action. One infamous episode, which exposed the link between ‘book’ and ‘action’, took place after Martin Luther published *The Freedom of a Christian Man* in 1520. From Luther’s pen and radical preachers like Thomas Muntzer great throngs of people read (or heard) that they were subject to no one. By 1525, some 300,000 German working people set out to test their new found equality. However, another of Luther’s works helped to incite brutal countermeasures to the ‘Peasants’ Revolt’. Soon after Luther wrote *Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants* (1525) well over 100,000 rebels died at the hands of men with better arms and a better birth. There remains debate over the extent to which the Peasants’ Revolt centred on theological arguments. Yet to a certain extent, books quickened and quelled the rebellion.

The printed word had a similar impact in the run-up to the 1640s. Censorship prevented the widespread dissemination of many puritan tracts. Even with limited hand-to-hand circulation, polemical sermons and pamphlet wars were hallmarks of the 1620s and 1630s. Flesh and blood tensions grew from ink-wrought accusations of popery and heresy. Battle lines emerged as readers learned to sort books and sermons into ‘pro-puritan’ or ‘pro-Laudian’ categories. In this period, Dowsing’s own reading material helped him absorb the political and theological zeitgeist. His books and sermons were precious to him, as they would have been to anyone seeking insight into recent disruptions within church and state.

Twenty-three years before delivering his first jolt to images in Cambridgeshire, Dowsing purchased a book. At the time he was newly married to Thamar Lea and living in Coddanham.

The book, Thomas Dighton's *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie to Kneeling in the Very Act of Receiving the Lords Supper* (1618), was among the earliest of Dowsing's acquisitions. Such a purchase reveals much about the twenty-four-year-old Dowsing and his annotations in the text disclose an awareness of theological controversies. More to the point of this project, they show that by his mid-twenties he was already immersed in literature concerning worship. In Dighton's book, worship is an event governed by Scripture. Early on in the work Dowsing noted the following section with emphasis:

For can any doubtful matter possibly bee of faith, and may anything of religious use which is not of faith be conformed into the worship of God? And can anything of this nature have certainty for the lawfulness of it, unlesse it be evidently warranted by the word of God? I conclude therefore that to conform to anything of religious use, which is not commanded in the word of God, or (which is all one) truly ground thereon and so warranted thereby, is to conforme to meere Incertainty and Novelty, even to I know not what, which at the very best must be an ignorant worship a gesture at Random and a ceremony at all a very venture.¹

This is just one section that piqued Dowsing's interest as he read. He would very often mark passages like this with a bold line in the margin for their rhetorical force or scriptural fidelity. In an article from the late nineteenth century, Cecil Deeds noted that Dowsing 'selected for his admiration, with considerable judgement, many of [an] author's cleverest and most epigrammatic points'.² Deeds studied just one of Dowsing's books, Francis Quarles' *Divine Fancies* (1632), which Dowsing read in the early days of his campaign (23-25 December 1643). Deeds set out to demonstrate the 'side-light which a man's books, especially when annotated, can hardly fail to shed upon his character'.³ The purpose of this chapter is to examine Dowsing's habits of reading and annotation and to compare them with those of his contemporaries. While

¹ Thomas Dighton, *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie to Kneeling in the Very Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper* (Leiden: W. Brewster, 1618), p. 10. Dowsing's copy of this book is held by Dr. Williams's Library, 564.C.9.

² Cecil Deeds, "A Portraiture of William Dowsing, the Parliamentary Visitor, 1643/4," *East Anglian Notes and Queries* 7 (1897-98), p. 19.

³ Deeds, "A Portraiture of William Dowsing," p. 17.

this study certainly values insights into Dowsing's character, it maintains a broader scope and a finer point than Deeds' article. The scope is broader in that more of Dowsing's library is in view. The finer point is how Dowsing's reading material helped to refine his understanding of the corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm. Books filled the space between his open-air attacks on idolatry and his closed-door considerations of issues facing the church in the seventeenth century.

The place of reading in English culture during Dowsing's lifetime has received considerable scholarly attention. Dowsing obviously stood out as a remarkable example of puritan zeal but his reading habits were indicative of a growing trend among puritan laity. The 'evangelical reading culture' had grown steadily since the Reformation, often with violent results. In fact, James Simpson argued that the kind of reading birthed by the Reformation had a greater chance of producing violence. He noted that 'literalist' approaches to Scripture, proposed by the likes of Luther and Tyndale, created a fanatical evangelical reading culture which always stood on the brink of violence. He contrasted this trend with the 'consensual [and] historically grounded' approach to reading, modelled by Thomas More.⁴ Simpson's treatment of 'evangelicals' is heavy-handed and his reverence for More is clear. However, he hints at something that this chapter seeks to make explicit. Seventeenth century readers in the Reformed tradition rarely read out of a love for dialogue or open-ended debate. The godly community encouraged readers to read in order to get the definitive word. Scripture was the final arbiter of truth, but writings by learned divines often set a reader to action with a newly settled conscience. Settled consciences feel comfortable with decisive action. This was certainly the case for William Dowsing. The texts he read helped to bolster his desire for a completed Reformation.

⁴ James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 259.

The laity gained exposure to vast sums of theological, historical and political debate as books became more accessible in England. The godly saw the rise of print as a God-ordained means to ‘enable Christ’s church to be repaired, abuses repressed, and true doctrine restored’.⁵ Therefore, studying Dowsing as ‘the reader’ will help to gauge how this burgeoning accessibility galvanized the iconoclastic rationale within the puritan movement.

Dowsing read in a certain way. More precisely, he read with the intent of receiving a definitive word on a subject. His marginal notes are rarely introspective and usually give the impression that he either agreed with a particular section or found it heretical. He streamlined his reading to capture main points, rebuke false assertions and make plans for action.⁶ In this way, reading was indispensable for Dowsing. Works from Calvinist divines sustained him and works from other perspectives sharpened him. Scripture was the gavel he used to render judgement on each line of text. The present assessment of Dowsing’s reading habits sets the stage for an examination of his collection of parliamentary fast sermons in the next chapter. Together, the two chapters capture Dowsing with book and pen before he picked up hammer and chisel, and edge ever closer to capturing the puritan iconoclastic rationale ‘from within’. Dowsing’s own intense private study is a fitting metaphor for the internal logic that sustained a corporate, public rationale. In order to situate Dowsing’s reading habits this chapter now turns to examine the state of reading in seventeenth century England.

II. Dowsing Among His Peers: Reading Habits in 17th Century England

Dowsing collected sermons, annotated books of poetry, cited lengthy historical works and filled margins with biblical references. Do these habits make him a rare specimen in

⁵ Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 1.

⁶ See section III of this chapter for additional discussion of Dowsing’s annotations. Appendix One lists examples of key annotations from the cover pages of Dowsing sermons. Appendix Two offers examples of Dowsing’s annotations.

seventeenth century Suffolk? A first step toward measuring the similarity between Dowsing and his fellow East Anglians is to examine the literacy rate in the region during the 1640s. Assessing the overall ability to read will set the backdrop for Dowsing's love of reading. Tessa Watt advanced findings which suggest that by 1640, East Anglian yeoman and husbandmen were 61% and 21% literate, compared to regions further north like Northumberland, where the figures were 23% and 13%.⁷ Of course, scholars have arrived at these figures in a less than scientific way. The numbers came from the percentage of people who could sign their name, which did not necessarily equate with reading ability.⁸ Watt cited persuasive research by Margaret Spufford who argued that these figures grossly underestimate reading ability in the 1640s. Spufford likened English education to that of Sweden, where many times reading was taught apart from writing.⁹ Thus, Watt concluded that 'the literacy statistics should be taken as minimum figures, not as certainties'.¹⁰

These figures do show that there was an emerging reading culture in Suffolk during Dowsing's lifetime, even if they do not relate specifically to Dowsing's peers. He was a yeoman farmer but he operated within highly educated circles. Although Manchester's commission politely addressed him as a 'Gentleman', he seems to have been a part of the 'middling sort' who were growing so quickly in the seventeenth century.¹¹ As Ian Green described, this sort were

like the gentry, in the market for sermons on why God had sent the plague, or fire, or war, or funeral sermons on people they knew, as well as for collections of prayers and handbooks on godly living and godly dying, works combining edification and

⁷ Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p. 7.

⁸ Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p. 7.

⁹ Margaret Spufford, "First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Autobiographers," *Social History* 4 (1979), pp. 407-435.

¹⁰ Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p. 7.

¹¹ John Morrill identified Dowsing as a 'typical yeoman', by income standards. He held freehold and copyhold lands in two separate parishes but his income was in the range of £50-£80 p.a. Even Dowsing's home seems to fit into the yeoman class. Morrill writes, '[his house] was longitudinal in shape, three rooms upstairs and three downstairs, with a large fireplace between two of them'. See Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 3.

entertainment such as religious verse and improving biographies ... and copies of catechisms and small bibles for their children to take to church.¹²

His reading selections were slightly more cerebral than Green's description of his class. His affinity for reading and his highly disciplined approach placed him on the upper tier of reading in Suffolk, but he was not unique.

Dowsing's habit of annotating his books supports Stephen Dobranski's claims of a tradition of 'active reading' which began mostly among scholarly readers in the Renaissance culture of sixteenth century England. As scholars read and critiqued arguments, they filled their margins with their own ideas and reflections. The tradition continued in the seventeenth century. The next generation of 'active' readers 'were not always classically trained scholars', argues Dobranski, 'but still they had to intervene in a text to make it meaningful and in some cases appropriated the text for their own purposes'.¹³ William Sherman has shown that, around the turn of the seventeenth century in England, '[young] readers were not only allowed to write notes in and on their books, they were taught to do so at school'.¹⁴ This set early modern reading apart from previous periods in which reading was 'treated as a relatively passive experience'.¹⁵ Dobranski also asserts that the importance of 'active reading' for author and reader in the mid-seventeenth century 'owed something to the fragmentation and social upheaval brought about by and prompting the civil war'.¹⁶ Dobranski's assertions suggest that Dowsing's collection of parliamentary fast sermons served the iconoclast's growing concern over conditions in church and state. Seventeenth century readers found actively reading and annotating political tracts and parliamentary sermons gave a cathartic experience, the ability to do something active rather than

¹² Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 36.

¹³ Stephen B. Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 22.

¹⁴ William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 3.

¹⁵ Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England*, p. 23.

¹⁶ Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England*, p. 44.

watching world events passively. As Dowsing ‘the reader’ followed the arguments with his pen, he engaged with the ongoing strife in his homeland. There, in that vicarious encounter, Dowsing was ‘in Parliament’ encouraging the preacher as he lambasted Laudian excesses.

Among puritans, the emphasis on reading had grown steadily from the turn of the seventeenth century. There was a belief among ‘the godly’ that improved literacy would translate into improved spirituality. The relatively new emphasis on written texts in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries made literacy all the more cherished. As David Cressy has argued, ‘Literacy was singled out as a tool for godliness, a weapon against anti-Christ, and an essential component in leading a proper Christian life’.¹⁷ Adam Fox rather overstated the case when he asserted that preachers insisted on reading among the laity because, ‘Only by reading the Bible ... could souls come to enter the celestial kingdom’.¹⁸ Even as Bible-reading increased as a spiritual discipline among puritans, reading was not widely equated with salvation. For a literate person to neglect Scripture would have suggested a lack of saving grace, but the literate did not corner the salvation market. God could generate faith through preaching as well as reading.

Although Fox overstated the efficacy of reading, he rightly emphasized reading’s importance among ‘the godly’. In Dowsing’s Suffolk, Elnathan Parr was known for his efforts to instil knowledge of the Word among the unlearned. His *Grounds of Divinitie* set forth memorable doctrines for those who could read and ‘who wanted [doctrinal] knowledge’.¹⁹ The

¹⁷ David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 3.

¹⁸ Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 46.

¹⁹ Elnathan Parr, *The Grounds of Diuinitie Plainely Discovering the Mysteries of Christian Religion, Propounded Familiarly in Diuers Questions and Answers: Substantially Proued by Scriptures; Expounded Faithfully, According to the Writings of the Best Diuines, and Evidently Applied by Profitable Vses, for the Helpe and Benefit of the Unlearned Which Desire Knowledge. To the Which Is Prefixed a Very Profitable Treatise, Contayning an Exhortation to the Studie of the Word, with Singular Directions for the Hearing and Reading of the*

illiterate were not given an exemption, rather, they should be taught to read and to read the Word. He concluded that those who ‘are able and not able to read are bound to study the Scriptures’.²⁰ The goal was for everyone, without regard for social standing, to be rooted and grounded in the Word. Once taught these ‘grounds’, the faithful follower should increase in skill so he could read the Word of God and discern these truths first-hand. Technically, Parr’s emphasis was not on reading, *per se*, but knowing the Word. His arguments pointed to a need for believers to be ‘filled with the knowledge of God’, which could come by hearing the Word. But Parr presented reading as something that should be universal among the godly. Parr’s efforts reveal a ‘puritan’ belief that salvation came through hearing, but proper discipleship demanded the ability to read.

Fox also rightly identified a certain antipathy toward reading among lower classes in seventeenth century England. He cited Richard Baxter, who claimed that the uneducated invariably grew into ‘a malignant scorne and hatred, of that which they want’.²¹ But a tide of literacy was beginning to wash away the taste of sour grapes. As Fox surmised, ‘the enormous volume of written material in almost every context must have done something to develop the sense that to be incapable of understanding it ... was to be missing out’.²² Thus, literacy was as much in vogue as it was indispensable to discipleship. As literacy gained a hold on almost every stratum of society, ideas and controversies spread quickly through the ever-improving network of writing and dissemination.

Same. Newly Corrected, Augmented, and Enlarged by Elnathan Parr, Minister of the Word at Palgraue in Suffolke (London: printed by N.O. for Samuel Man, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls church-yard, at the signe of the Svvanne, 1625)

²⁰ Parr, *An Exhortation to Study the Word* (Attached to *Grounds of Divinitie*), p. 4.

²¹ Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, p. 20.

²² Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, p. 44.

Publishers saw opportunities for profit among these new groups of readers. Ian Green demonstrated how dedicatory epistles showed a publisher's eye for a sales market. Whereas previous books may have begun with a 'Dear Reader' or 'Good Christian Reader', seventeenth century books often included specialised labels: 'Ladies', 'Poor', 'Youth', 'The Old' or 'Those of Limited Capacities'. Green argued, 'Such forms of address reflect a growing awareness in authors' minds of the need to target printed works at specific groups, but may also again reflect publishers' awareness of ... insufficiently tapped markets'.²³ Dobranski added further importance to these new forms of address. More precision in addressing the audience acknowledged the growing importance of the reader, from the author's and the reader's point of view. In short, Dobranski claimed, 'readers were being told that they mattered'.²⁴ The parliamentary fast sermons which Dowsing so feverishly collected were widely available in the 1640s because publishers knew the recent political events would boost sales. Dowsing represented a much sought-after demographic. However, the benefit was mutual. The growing book market satisfied Dowsing's need for regular spiritual stimulation.

Lawrence Stone once dubbed the period between 1560 and 1640 as England's 'educational revolution' and there are many factors that support his claim.²⁵ The boom in university attendance in the seventeenth century underscored the rise of literacy and the general growth of educational institutions. In the 1620s and 1630s the combined number of undergraduates entering Oxford and Cambridge colleges reached 1,000 per year. This was a marked improvement from the later part of the sixteenth century when the two schools welcomed only 300 new students in a given year.²⁶ Dowsing was an indirect participant in the growing

²³ Green, *Print and Protestantism*, pp. 10-11.

²⁴ Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England*, p. 38.

²⁵ Quoted in David Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), p. 9.

²⁶ Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, pp. 9-10.

universities. Although he did not go to university, he sent his son Samuel to the puritan stronghold of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.²⁷

The revolutionary air blowing through England in the 1640s led many to believe that many social structures should be overhauled. Although a national schooling system was far off, zealous proponents of education deduced that it was ‘a necessary, needful work to set up general schooling over the land for the reforming of children from those vices which they act against God’.²⁸ One of those vices was revelling in ignorance, which could only be overcome by proper education. By 1649 John Dury was expressing a two-fold rationale for educating ‘both boys and girls’. The first purpose of education for Dury was that all of England’s citizens would be set on the ‘Way of Godliness’. The second purpose was to instil in them a kind of ‘serviceableness’ to the nation. In short, many puritans were calling for a nation of well-educated Reformed patriots.²⁹

The written word was everywhere and more and more of Dowsing’s contemporaries were reading it. But it is easy to overstate England’s transition from a ‘visual’ to a ‘literate’ culture. After all, Dowsing still had much to cleanse during his campaign in the 1640s. The introductory chapter alluded to Patrick Collinson’s diagnosis that seventeenth century England suffered from ‘visual anorexia’.³⁰ He cited 1580 as the rather specific moment when the cultural shift from ‘image’ to ‘word’ occurred. While Tessa Watt agreed that there was a general ‘tightening restriction on religious images’ from the middle of Elizabeth’s reign through the early

²⁷ Thomas Cocke, “Foreword,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. xviii. See Morrill, “William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 3.

²⁸ Samuel Harnar, *Vox Populi or Glostersheres Desire with the Way and Means to Make a Kingdome Happy (by Gods help) by Setting up of Schoole-masters in Every Parish throughout the Land Generally, Being Fit for theHhelp of Religious Ministers in their Heavenly Worke, and for the Removing of the Tthree Capitall Enormities of this Land, viz. Ignorance, Prophanesse and Idlenesse* (London: Printed for Thomas Bates, 1642), quoted in Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 22.

²⁹ John Dury, *The Reformed School* (London: Printed by R.D. for Richard Wodnothe, 1649), quoted in David Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 22.

³⁰ See Collinson’s discussion in *The Birthpangs of Protestant England*, pp. 94-126.

seventeenth century, she is quick to add that ‘there is nothing to indicate a sudden break, or total repudiation of images’.³¹ Watt prefers to cite the general substituting of ‘acceptable’ images for ‘unacceptable’. Watt argued that Collinson ‘overstated the extent to which people were cut off from traditional Christian imagery’ in the seventeenth century.³² The result was that the rise in reading did not totally eliminate the power or popularity of the image.

While it did not succeed in cleansing all imagery from England, reading was having a powerful impact. Another way to grasp the effect reading had during the 1630s and 1640s is to examine one of Dowsing’s contemporaries, Nehemiah Wallington. Comparison with Wallington is fruitful because he was a puritan layman who left behind volumes of personal writings. Dowsing and Wallington were both born in the final years of Elizabeth’s reign and lived much of their adult lives in turbulent times. Wallington was born on 12 May 1598, just two years after Dowsing. Dowsing was a farmer and a soldier in Suffolk while Wallington was a second-generation wood turner in London.³³ The two men shared puritan sympathies and supported the parliamentary cause. If the two were placed on a theological continuum in the 1640s, they would have occupied a similar spot. Yet within their ‘puritan world’ the two men were poles apart. Dowsing seems to have been a man who reached conclusions and took action. Wallington was a man who reached conclusions only to subject himself to obstinate introspection. One leaned toward action, the other toward reflection; both leaned toward reading.

Wallington’s reading habits once led him into controversy. A Star Chamber official questioned him in 1638 for reading seditious books by Bastwick, Burton and Prynne.³⁴ He also

³¹ Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p. 135.

³² Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, pp. 136-137.

³³ Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington*, p. 5.

³⁴ Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington*, p. 4.

took part in the puritan demonstrations outside Westminster in 1641.³⁵ These events notwithstanding, he was a quiet man who rarely ventured more than a day's journey from his home in London. According to David Booy, 'In Wallington's view, God's work could be done in the study as well as in Parliament, on the battlefield or in the streets'.³⁶ He was a keen observer of current events but rarely participated in them. As his biographer Paul Seaver remarked, '[Wallington] left almost no discernable impact on his time'.³⁷ Nonetheless, he did leave a 'discernable impact' on later generations through his journals.

Wallington left behind over 2,600 pages of personal reflections. He recorded his thoughts in notebooks which covered subjects including 'memoirs, religious reflections, political reportage, letters and a spiritual diary'.³⁸ Through Wallington's notebooks modern readers get a candid look into the internal pondering of a seventeenth-century puritan layman. None of Dowsing's annotations or journal entries was as frank as Wallington's reflection on a fast in 1642. He fasted, listened to the sermon and participated in the prayers. But this was his reaction:

Although Mr. Roborough did pray so heavenly and preach so profitably, yet my heart would not yield ... yet did I remain dead and drowsy, the day being very irksome and duties very tedious unto me, like one that never knew or heard of God.³⁹

Wallington was not just a chronicler; he was also an avid reader. He noted that by 1650 he had read over two hundred books and 'read over the Bible many times'.⁴⁰ He had a vast library but seemed to favour a few books, alluding frequently to John Dod's *A Treatise or Exposition upon the Ten Commandments* (1609). The difference between Wallington and

³⁵ Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington*, p. 6.

³⁶ Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington*, p. 7.

³⁷ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 1.

³⁸ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 2.

³⁹ Quoted in Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 38.

⁴⁰ Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington*, p. 20.

Dowsing in regard to note-taking is not difficult to discern. For example, after reading a few of Jeremiah Burroughs' works, Wallington wrote a forty-five page reflection on 'that which is most useful'. He referred to this as 'a few broken scraps' of 'what was most liking to my mind out of that man of God, Mr. Burroughs book'.⁴¹ It will become clear that, in a similar instance, Dowsing would probably only underline a few paragraphs in the text.

Both men approached reading differently. Wallington felt compelled to speak alongside the authors he read. One finds it difficult to determine where the author's thoughts ended and Wallington's reflections began. He integrated quotes from newspaper clippings seamlessly with scriptural exegesis. He assigned equal spiritual fervour to news from the battlefield and his own personal crises. He plainly described his spiritual anguish over contemporary issues.

Conversely, Dowsing seems to have permitted the author to speak for himself, with only the slightest mark to denote approval. When Dowsing rejected an idea he used more words, perhaps to demonstrate the depth of his zeal. Also, Wallington preferred to keep a 'spiritual notebook' while Dowsing made his notes in the text itself.⁴² Yet even if modern observers cannot read Dowsing's most personal thoughts, his actions reveal something of his thinking. There lies the distinction between Dowsing and Wallington: as their lives testify, Wallington gathered writings to sustain his lengthy personal reflections; Dowsing used books as a set of ideas on which to build support for decisive action. Both men showed a high view of the written word. But, once again, the two were driven by divergent intents.

Dowsing and Wallington shared a sense of history and posterity. Many of Dowsing's less introspective notes were intended for his private benefit, but he likely believed that the

⁴¹ Quoted in Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 5.

⁴² This observation comes from available evidence. Dowsing might have kept a spiritual diary, but it is not extant. In that sense, the comparison is an argument from silence. However, the evidence we have does support the notion that Dowsing was a man of fewer words than Wallington. Even his iconoclasm journal reads as though Dowsing would rather speak words than write them.

journal chronicling his iconoclasm would be of historical significance. That may be why he went to such great pains to demonstrate his triumph over the Fellows of Pembroke. Wallington's often embarrassingly intimate reflections also seemed designed for others to read. Paul Seaver and Tom Webster agreed that Wallington wrote with an eye beyond his own death.⁴³ Although the two had a shared appreciation of history, they occupy very different places in history. Wallington's reputation as a harmless bookworm makes him an object of simple curiosity. Dowsing's kinetic Puritanism makes him an object of often shocking caricature.

To be sure, both men were severe. Dowsing's place in history is secured due to his rigorous public application of Scripture. Wallington was equally rigorous in personal watchfulness. In 1643 Wallington noted that, just one day after a Sabbath 'resolution' to be sober in his deportment, he spoke 'idly' and 'delighted in one who did so too'. For Wallington, this was grave indeed. He reflected, 'This sin of mine did grieve me'.⁴⁴ Both Dowsing's and Wallington's outlook must be contextualized within the broader puritan perspective outlined thus far in this project. They believed they were subject to the authority of Scripture in every nuance of life. They feared that the disobedience of God's people had resulted in the political and religious upheaval in England. They were certain that God governed every world event through his meticulous providence. Finally, they believed that purity of the Gospel was under attack from papists and Laudians alike. Their severity was proportionate to the spiritual realities they believed to be at stake in the seventeenth century. Both men brought this severity to the subject of reading as yet another expression of earnest devotion.

⁴³ Tom Webster, "Writing to Redundancy: Approaches to Spiritual Journals and Early Modern Spirituality," *The Historical Journal* 39, no. 1 (1996), p. 39. In this article Webster demonstrates the interesting notion that many puritans kept private journals which were actually intended for public consumption.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Paul Seaver, "The Puritan Work Ethic Revisited," *Journal of British Studies* 19, no. 2 (1980), p. 42.

III. Dowsing at Study

The next chapter argues that Dowsing embraced the parliamentary fast sermons, in large part, because they so often called for specific action in the cause of Reformation. However, Dowsing's library included much more than sermons and Bibles. As his annotations show, Dowsing was a collector of ideas, not just a reader of books. Although many modern scholars see his iconoclasm as a kind of madness, his books show that there was a kind of method in it. Since his iconoclastic campaign was partly the outgrowth of decades of reading, this chapter now turns now to Dowsing at study.

The American presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin wrote of the largely self-educated Abraham Lincoln, 'Books became his academy, his college. The printed word united his mind with the great minds of generations past'.⁴⁵ This was also true of Dowsing. His books not only united him with great minds of the past, but also helped him understand the present. The nineteenth century historian Cecil Deeds saw a tension between Dowsing's love of books and his less refined public actions. Deeds wrote, 'one cannot help regretting that a man of such commendable learning, observation, and character, should have left behind him so odious and detestable a memory'.⁴⁶ Although the destruction meted out to churches may strain modern sensibilities, Dowsing saw his iconoclasm as perfectly consistent with God's will and purposes. He was not only tearing down images, he was establishing something invisible. As he tore down 'monuments of superstition', he was also doing two positive things. In his view, he was erecting the 'true worship' of the unseen God and he was preserving the purity of the Gospel. We find

⁴⁵ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York; London: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

⁴⁶ Deeds, "A Portraiture of William Dowsing," p. 19.

the foundation for this ‘invisible building’ in much of Dowsing’s reading material. Arguments for iconoclasm permeate the books and sermons he owned.

Dowsing collected books like he read them: with intent. As John Morrill identified much, if not all, of Dowsing’s library, he suggested that Dowsing’s collection can be grouped into distinct sections. His books were mostly theological, historical, or both. Most of the theological works were from ‘a safe Calvinist stable’.⁴⁷ Chapter Four indicated that Dowsing owned a copy of Gervase Babington’s *Comfortable Notes Upon the Five Books of Moses* (1604). In many ways Babington was a ‘populizer’ of Calvinist doctrine so it is not surprising that Dowsing owned a copy of Babington’s treatment of the Pentateuch. The other, perhaps more interesting, work which Morrill linked to Dowsing’s library was Joseph Caryl’s voluminous commentary on the book of Job.⁴⁸

Dowsing may have identified with Job, at least in the way Caryl painted him. Caryl spent the better part of three decades commenting on Job’s trials. He explained his sustained interest by noting that Job’s afflictions pointed to ‘the image of these times and presents us with a resemblance of the past, present and (much hoped for) future condition of this nation’.⁴⁹ Caryl’s later lectures on the book of Job (1644) indicated that he constructed the commentary around ‘a main and principal subject’.⁵⁰ The ‘principal subject’ was Psalm 34:29, ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth them out of them all’.⁵¹ Perhaps Dowsing benefitted from the assurance that God would vindicate the iconoclast’s ‘righteous’ cause. Whatever

⁴⁷ Morrill, “William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 5.

⁴⁸ Joseph Caryl, *An Exposition with Practical Observations Upon the Three First Chapters of the Book of Job* (London: Printed by G. Miller for Henry Overton, and Luke Fawne and Iohn Rothwell, 1643).

⁴⁹ Caryl’s commentary quoted in J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England: Anglicans, Puritans, and the Two Tables, 1620-1670* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 235.

⁵⁰ Joseph Caryl, *An Exposition with Practicall Observations Upon the Three First Chapters of the Booke of Job Delivered in XXI Lectures, at Magnus Neare the Bridge, London* (London: Printed by G. Miller, for Henry Overton, and Luke Fawne and Iohn Rothwell, 1644).

⁵¹ Quoted in J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England*, p. 236.

Dowsing's feelings about the commentary, we know that he bequeathed all of his books to his eldest son, except for 'Caryl upon Job'. His will records his intention to leave the commentary to his wife: 'I give and bequeath all of my Books to my son Samuel ... excepting only Caryl upon Job, the first six parts which I give unto my wife to have the use thereof as long as she liveth'.⁵² Dowsing also had an affinity for Caryl's preaching. His collection of parliamentary fast sermons contains seven sermons by Caryl. Nine months before Dowsing's campaign began, he read Caryl's sermon on Revelation 2:1-4, *The Works of Ephesus Explained* (1642). In the text the risen Christ rebukes the church in Ephesus for 'leaving [their] first love'. Caryl's writing and preaching exposed Dowsing to how the Lord 'delivered' the righteous and 'rebuked' the wayward.⁵³

The rest of the theological section of Dowsing's library contained a remarkable assortment of books. It is only possible to discern his ownership of these tomes through references in marginalia of his other books. He owned Heinrich Bullinger's *A Most Sure and Strong Defence of the Baptisme of Infants* (1551). Other titles are more striking, like Pocklington's *Altare Christianum* (1637) which Dowsing cited in the margin of the sermon *The Vanity and Mischief of the Thoughts of a Heart Unwashed* (1645) by Cornelius Burges.⁵⁴ Pocklington was an ardent defender of Laud's altar policy. He believed, '[the altar] is the most holy place of all others under the cope of heaven'.⁵⁵ Dowsing clearly did not mind reading

⁵² I am grateful to John Blatchly who provided a transcription of Dowsing's will.

⁵³ Chapter Six provides an extensive analysis of these sermons. Caryl's contribution receives fuller treatment there.

⁵⁴ Cornelius Burges, *Two Sermons Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at Two Publike Fasts; the One, March 30. 1642. The Other, April 30. 1645. The Former, Opening the Necessity and Benefit of Washing the Heart. The Later, Discovering the Vanity and Mischief of an Heart Unwashed. By Cor. Burges, D.D. Minister of the Gospel, in Pauls-London. Published in Obedience to Severall Orders of That Honourable House* (London: Printed by J.R. for Christopher Meredith, at the Crane in Pauls-Church-yard, 1645). In Dowsing's collection see III.8.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat*, p. 194. For Pocklington's contribution to the altar arguments of the 1630s see John Pocklington, *Altare Christianum: Or, the Dead Vicars Plea Wherein the Vicar of Gr. Being Dead, yet Speaketh, and Pleadeth out of Antiquity, against Him That Hath Broken Downe His Altar. Presented, and*

books which ran counter to his puritan scruples. Perhaps this willingness to read material from an opposing view prepared him for the spirited quarrel with the Fellows of Pembroke.

Although he did possess the occasional Laudian book, Dowsing usually spent his money on pro-puritan, anti-Catholic works. Two representative pieces were Thomas Clarke's *The Pope's Deadly Wound* (1635) and George Walker's *The Manifold Wisdome of God, in the Divers Dispensations of Grace by Jesus Christ* (1641). The first chapter of Clarke's book claims that there remained no possible 'reconciliation betwixt Protestants and Papists'. Clarke granted that the two systems shared 'one God', but that was where the similarities ended. Reformed Christians and Catholics made divergent claims about the nature of salvation and what constituted true worship. Therefore, for Clarke, the only remedy was for the Protestant cause to triumph. In chapter eleven Clarke dissects the papist's visual approach to worship. He builds a case against this approach by demonstrating how both apostles and angels forbade anyone to worship them. Then he pressed home the argument alliteratively, in terms that surely resonated with the iconoclast:

Wherefore, this utterly condemneth the Papists of most pestilent perverseness, that will so directly, contrary to so evident a truth, teach men to worship Saints, yes, and not onely so, but that which is most horrible to hear, the very dumb Pictures & Images of Saints.⁵⁶

The reader is left with one conclusion after Clarke's argument unfolds: something must be done.

Clarke makes the main point clear and the call to action even clearer.

Humbly Submitted to the Consideration of His Superiours, the Governours of Our Church. By Iohn Pocklington. Dr. D (London: Printed by Richard Badger, 1637). Pocklington was not only in favour of Laud's altar policy. He also placed himself far outside of puritan favour with his tract *Sunday no Sabbath* (1636) which argued that Christ abrogated any sense of a Christian 'Sabbath'. Pocklington's position in Pembroke College Cambridge further confirms his theological affiliation. See Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, pp. 149-160.

⁵⁶ Thomas Clarke, *The Popes Deadly Wound Tending to Resolue All Men, in the Chiefe and Principall Points Now in Controversie Betweene the Papists and Vs.* Written by T.C. And Published by Doctor Burges, Pastor of Sutton Coldfield in Warwickshire (Printed at London: By A. G[riffin] for N. Newbery, and are to be sold at the signe of the Star in Popes head Alley, 1635), p. 422. The title is an allusion to Revelation 13:3 which tells of the seven-headed 'beast' receiving a 'deadly wound'.

Dowsing's copy of Walker's *Manifold Wisdome* allows scholars to see not only what he was reading but how he read.⁵⁷ Dowsing made meticulous notes and corrections in the text. The last introductory page is one called 'Faults escaped', meaning the publisher found the errors and simply noted them at the beginning of the book. Beside the title of this commonplace errata page, Dowsing simply wrote the word 'Mended'. Just as he took up the parliamentary ordinance and Manchester's commission as guides for 'mending' the churches, Dowsing followed up the corrections to be made, noting them in the margin to avoid error.

His scripture annotations in *Manifold Wisdome* further underscore his penchant for precision. Where Walker gave a cursory summary of salvation history, mentioning God's curse toward the serpent and the promised seed of Abraham – simply citing Genesis 3 to refer to the curse – Dowsing penned in an accurate 'v15'. When Walker, citing God's promise to Abraham, wrote 'Gen.12', Dowsing supplied the 'v3'. Walker referred to Jacob's blessing to Judah with the note 'Gen. 49'. Dowsing added that the blessing came specifically in verse '10' of that chapter. Walker did cite chapter and verse when alluding to Moses and the two tablets of stone: he wrote 'Deuter.9.vers.9'. Not to be outdone, Dowsing inserted a quick '&v10' in the margin.⁵⁸

Elsewhere, Dowsing felt compelled to include a host of passages not taken into account by the author or preacher. One example will provide overwhelming evidence for Dowsing's desire to have the Bible represented accurately. As he preached *Israel's Peace with God* before Parliament in August 1642, William Carter named God as, 'The Lord of hosts who ordereth at his pleasure, what event shall be in any enterprise'.⁵⁹ This catapulted Dowsing into his own

⁵⁷ George Walker, *The Manifold Wisdome of God. In the Divers Dispensation of Grace by Jesus Christ in the Old and New Testament in the Covenant of Faith and Workes: Their Agreement and Difference* (London: Printed by R.H. for Iohn Bartlet, 1641). Dowsing's copy is in Dr. Williams's Library, London, 3029.D.24.

⁵⁸ See Dowsing's copy of George Walker, *The Manifold Wisdome of God*, p. 105 in Dr. Williams's Library 3029.D.24.

⁵⁹ William Carter, *Israel's Peace with God, Beniamines Overthrow. A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Solemne Fast, August 31. 1642. By William Carter. Published by*

Bible. Dowsing neatly wrote, 'Zech 1.3.4.6.12.14.16.17&2.8.11& 7.3.4.9.12.13 &8.1.2.3.4.6.7.8.11.14-18.19.20.21.22.23' next to Carter's reference. Upon close examination, it is apparent that Dowsing simply listed every verse in the book of Zechariah which featured the phrase 'Lord of Hosts'.⁶⁰

Dowsing's eye for precision was not aimed solely at Scripture references. His annotations in *A True Modest and Just Defense of the Petition for Reformation* (1618) show how he read each line with care.⁶¹ In an unusual introductory section the ministers and preachers bemoaned how long it took for this defence of the Reformation to come to print. They claimed that it was drafted in 1608 and they had to wait an excruciating fourteen years for it to be published. However, quick-eyed Dowsing makes the simple observation in the margin, 'falsified by the ministers or by the printer or by the author. For from 1608 to 1618 is but 10 years'.⁶² Since the stamped print date is in fact 1618, Dowsing scores a small triumph of precision. His quest to maintain an accurate rendering of time continues in the parliamentary fast sermons when Cornelius Burges suggests that the prophet Jeremiah preached 'about thirtie years'. Dowsing jots 'Jeremy prched 39 years' in the margin.⁶³

Order from That House (London: Printed for Giles Calvert, and are to be sold by Christopher Meredith at the sign of the Crane in Pauls Church-yard, M.DC.XLII, 1642), p. 6. In Dowsing's collection see IV.23.6.

⁶⁰ If Dowsing owned a concordance it is not extant. Ian Green shows that concordances were becoming more common in the mid-seventeenth century. One example was Clement Cotton's complete concordance of the Old and New Testaments, published in 1635. Cotton intended the concordance for the 'simple' who were 'endeavouring to know Christ'. The more popular was John Downname's *A Brief Concordance to the Bible of the Last Translation* (1630). See "Different Ways of Approaching the Bible," Green, *Print and Protestantism*, pp. 124-129.

⁶¹ Dowsing's copy of *True Modest and Just Defense of the Petition for Reformation* (1618) is bound together with Dighton's *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie* (1618) in Dr. Williams's Library, 564.C.9. The *Defense* was submitted to James I and the Epistle Dedicatory was signed as 'Your Majesty's most faithful subjects, The Ministers and Preachers that desire Reformation according to the Word of God'.

⁶² Annotation in *True Modest and Just Defense of the Petition for Reformation* (1618), Dr. Williams's Library 564.C.9, p. 7.

⁶³ Cornelius Burges and Stephen Marshall, *The First Sermon, Preached to the Honourable House of Commons Now Assembled in Parliament at Their Publique Fast, Novemb. 17, 1640. / by Cornelius Burges* (London: Printed by I.L. for Philemon Stephens and Christopher Meredith, 1641), p. 3. In Dowsing's collection see IV.8.3.

The margins of the sermons in Dowsing's collection contain more than his own annotations. They contain fine examples of printed marginalia, placed by the publisher to 'define the audience, forward the [preacher's] "true" meaning, and promote a careful reading of the text'.⁶⁴ At times Dowsing relied on these pre-existing notes to lead him to important passages, which he then marked with his pen.⁶⁵ At other times, it seems that he placed notes where the publisher could have made a more thorough comment on the preacher's content. His personal additions to the text and the publisher's notes further support Dobranski's argument that in the seventeenth century, 'readers were conditioned to participate in their books'.⁶⁶

Dowsing's copy of the *Defence* is not simply evidence for his proofreading habit. He agreed with the vast majority of the text and was keen to emphasize certain sections of the tracts he read by marking in the margin the word 'observe'. Examples abound in the *Defense*.

Dowsing 'observed' these words:

For that which is not of knowledge can not be of faith (Rom. 10.17) and whatsoever is not of faith cannot be pleasing to God (Heb.11.6) but is sin (Rom. 14.23) and the wages of sin is death (Rom.6:23). I [kn]ow no gracious heart will esteem any sin light, or the wages thereof triviall. Wherefore, in the feare of God let all men beware how they do so lightly esteem these matters.⁶⁷

The words constitute a scriptural chain leading to an inescapable conclusion. Much of Dowsing's reading material produced similar arguments demanding action from 'gracious hearts'.

Dowsing 'observes' dozens of sections in Thomas Dighton's work as well, although he alternatively uses marginal brackets for emphasis. In a section returning to the main target of the

⁶⁴ Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 125.

⁶⁵ Appendix Two contains examples of the publisher's printed marginal notes.

⁶⁶ Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England*, p. 48.

⁶⁷ *True Modest and Just Defense of the Petition for Reformation* (1618), Dr. Williams's Library 564.C.9, p. 13.

tract – the innovation of kneeling to take the Lord’s Supper – Dowsing places brackets around nearly the entire page. A revealing sentence in this section reads ‘for wherein consists the faithfulness of Christ his Testimony but in revealing or making knowne all things concerning faith or government gestures or ceremonies, yea whatsoever the father would have the churches at any time in his worship and service to conform unto?’⁶⁸ In a statement that could have been written by Calvin or Knox, Dighton reiterates his displeasure with human innovations. Dowsing puts brackets around these words: ‘Everything therefore of Religious use which hath not warrant from the word of God is directly Evil, and to contend and be zealous for it is to goe a whoring after our own Inventions’.⁶⁹ In these two passages Dowsing found fuel for already fiery iconoclastic convictions. Even in this book purchased two decades before Dowsing’s campaign, puritan methods of exposition and rhetoric were coming to bear on the future iconoclast.

Dowsing made several marginal annotations in Dighton’s work repeatedly: ‘all persons that desire life are tied to the Worde and not to carnall reason’; ‘what is not warranted and grounded on God’s word is sin’; ‘all that conforme without warrant from the word are not of the truth’; ‘every ceremony is evill’; ‘antichrist the ordeyner of ceremonies that belong to God’; and ‘faith founded only on scripture’. Since Dowsing pens these lines so frequently in this work it is tempting to assume that these were Dowsing’s independent thoughts as he read, but in fact they are simple summary statements of what Dighton wrote. Their noticeable repetition denotes that Dighton struck a few drums loudly and often.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Dighton, *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie* (1618), Dr. Williams’s Library, 564.C.9, p. 15.

⁶⁹ Dighton, *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie* (1618), Dr. Williams’s Library, 564.C.9, p. 21.

⁷⁰ Dighton, *Certain Reasons of a Private Christian against Conformitie* (1618), Dr. Williams’s Library, 564.C.9, pp. 10, 15, 21 and 53.

In contrast to the more graphic of Dowsing's selections (such as 'whoring after Inventions'), the iconoclast valued poetic expressions as well. He took pleasure in Francis Quarles' *Divine Fancies* (1632). Quarles was a fellow East Anglian, given to epigrams and meditations. Dowsing seems to have liked much of Quarles' writing. One of Quarles' witty poems on general revelation led Dowsing to pen into the margin what is most likely his own creation:

Nothing of nothing had ye Great Creator
how & where with to make this heavenly Theator
ye world's a glasse of God's ternall (sic) honour
wher[e] in is shewn to worship him the maner

A Poet Laureate Dowsing was not. Cecil Deeds sardonically noted, 'from [this composition] one may safely say that if he had confined his efforts to construction rather than destruction, he would have made no noise in the world'.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Dowsing's annotations in *Divine Fancies* show that although he led a prosaic life for most of his days, the iconoclast still had an appreciation of, if not a gift for, poetry.⁷²

Another book in Dowsing's library was a 1548 edition of William Tyndale's classic, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548). Dowsing's annotations indicate that he read the book in 1637. Tyndale's fiery words in this treatise had a stimulating effect on Reformed Christians since its first publication in 1528. Many of Dowsing's annotations stress a familiar theme in Tyndale's writing, that God would be faithful to the cause of Reformation regardless of who opposed it. Dowsing notes this section with a thick line of ink early in the work:

⁷¹ Deeds, "A Portraiture of William Dowsing," p. 18.

⁷² Quarles is perhaps better known for his collection of *Emblems*, ornate visual representations of biblical scenes. This makes Dowsing's ownership of Quarles' poetry all the more interesting. There is no evidence that Dowsing owned *Emblems*. However, Quarles' introduction to *Emblems* may have made the iconoclast uncomfortable enough to leave it on the bookshop shelf: 'Before the knowledge of letters, God was known by Hieroglyphicks; And indeed, what are the Heavens, the Earth, nay every creature [but] Hieroglyphicks and Emblems of his Glory?' Quoted in Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 185.

He hath sworn; he is true; he will fulfill the promises that he hath made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is written for our learning: for verily he is a true God; and is our God as well as theirs; and his promises are with us, as well as with them; and he present with us, as well as he was with them. If we ask, we shall obtain; if we knock, he will open; if we seek, we shall find; if we thirst, his truth shall fulfill our lust. Christ is with us until the world's end. Let his little flock be bold therefore. For if God be on our side, what matter maketh it who be against us, be they bishops, cardinals, popes, or whatsoever names they will?⁷³

Tyndale's readers would get the sense that reformers felt most confident when they were in the minority. Tyndale called the 'little flock' of the faithful to rest in God's unyielding faithfulness. When Dowsing read this book in 1637, the furore against Laudianism was reaching its zenith among puritans. Dowsing was among the minority in this era, in the sense that puritans were estranged from power during the personal rule of Charles I. Tyndale offered great comfort in his call to stand fast against adversity.

Dowsing noted with a thin black line a celebrated passage of Tyndale's text. In this section, Tyndale argues that God insists upon levelling men to their foundation before rebuilding them. In many ways, this was the puritan attitude toward reforming religion in the 1640s.

Dowsing was not sent to rearrange the furniture or renovate the imagery. He was sent to 'utterly demolish' them. Dowsing scores a line beside these oft-quoted lines in *Obedience of a Christian Man*:

If God promise riches, the way thereto is poverty. Whom he loveth, him he chasteneth: whom he exalteth, he casteth, down: whom he saveth, he damneth first. He bringeth no

⁷³ William Tyndale, *The Obedience of Christen Man & How Christe[n] Rulers Ought to Governe* (Imprinted at London: By Thomas Rinalde and Wyllyam Hyll, and are to be solde at the north dore of Paules by Rychard Iugge at the sygne of the Byble, 1548), fol. 5v. Dowsing's copy of Tyndale is held in the Cambridge University Library. The 1548 edition (STC 24450) available in EEBO is Dowsing's copy provided by Cambridge University. I am thankful to Nicholas Smith at the Cambridge University Library for his assistance in transcribing the annotations in this text, many of which were not visible on EEBO. There are a number of transcriptions of Tyndale's text available, complete with modern spelling and punctuation. As an aid to this study, I compared Dowsing's copy of Tyndale to a searchable, full text version found on <http://www.godrules.net/library/tyndale/19tyndale7.htm>. Databases like this one do not include pagination or foliation. Due to the lengthy nature of the quotations in this section, the passages which Dowsing highlighted are given here with modern spelling and punctuation.

man to heaven, except he send him to hell first. If he promise life, he slayeth first: when he buildeth, he casteth all down first. He is no patcher; he cannot build on another man's foundation.⁷⁴

A familiar plank in the iconoclastic platform was that the images and altars of popery were actually manifestations of Antichrist. Chapter Two of this thesis discussed Thomas Beard's *Antichrist the Pope of Rome* (1625) as an example of anti-papists casting the pope in this role. Long before Beard penned his tract, Tyndale wrote about the need to 'root out' Antichrist and do away with all of his trappings. Dowsing used a pen stroke to stress this passage:

For it is impossible to preach Christ, except thou preach against antichrist; that is to say, them which with their false doctrine and violence of sword enforce to quench the true doctrine of Christ. And as thou canst heal no disease, except thou begin at the root; even so canst thou preach against no mischief, except thou begin at the bishops.⁷⁵

In context, Tyndale was railing against those who settled for half-measures in opposing the pope's (Antichrist's) schemes. He also demonstrated why bishops of his day were 'afraid' to preach Christ: because the implications of the true Gospel would indict the papacy. Dowsing used his pen to capture this passage likely because in it Tyndale captured the need to 'root out' evil where it is found, even if it means a danger to one's security. If puritans of the 1640s sought to make sawdust of Antichrist's roots and branches, Dowsing was an axe-man in the forest. However, as his meticulous marking of these and other passages show, he was not an unthinking workman. In the 1640s, after two decades of private reading about the need to preserve the pure Gospel, Dowsing undertook to apply those principles in fantastic fashion. Another passage brought to the fore by Dowsing's mark summarized Tyndale's appeal to preserve the Gospel:

But touch the scab of hypocrisy, *or* pope-holiness, and go about to utter their false doctrine, wherewith they reign as gods in the heart and consciences of men, and rob them not of lands, goods, and authority only, but also of the testament of God, and salvation that is in Christ.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 5r.

⁷⁵ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 41r.

⁷⁶ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 95v.

Tyndale also specifically addressed ‘images’ and ‘traditions’. Dowsing draws a solid line in the margin next to this passage:

But as Christ biddeth us beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, so beware of their counterfeited keys, and of their false net; which are their traditions and ceremonies, their hypocrisy and false doctrine, wherewith they catch, not souls unto Christ, but authority and riches unto themselves.⁷⁷

Later in Tyndale’s text Dowsing also pens a line alongside a section in which Tyndale laments, ‘offering to images, offering of wax and lights, which come to their vantage; besides the superstitious waste of wax in torches and tapers throughout the land’.⁷⁸ In what Dowsing read, Tyndale unpacked the full load of damage wrought by ‘popery’. According to Tyndale, Catholic worship robbed the people of treasure in heaven and earth; his distrust of the pope is palpable in his text. Dowsing gleaned volumes of anti-papal arguments as he read Tyndale.

Tyndale’s book dealt with the ‘obedience’ of Christian people but also demonstrated ‘how Christian rulers ought to govern’. Certain passages must have rung particularly true for Dowsing as he read them in the late 1630s. Tyndale’s not-so subtle message to Henry VIII would have carried parallels with Charles I. Dowsing emphasized this striking section with a clear pen stroke:

And though that the kings, by the falsehood of the bishops and abbots, be sworn to defend such liberties; yet ought they not to keep their oaths, but to break them; forasmuch as they are unright and clean against God’s ordinance, and even but cruel oppression, contrary unto brotherly love and charity.⁷⁹

In other words, if the king found that he was in league with anyone who was ultimately harming his people, the king was duty-bound to break any oath or tie to that person. At the time Dowsing marked this section in 1637, the godly believed that Charles I was in just such a relationship with

⁷⁷ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 60v.

⁷⁸ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 82v.

⁷⁹ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 84v.

William Laud. Puritans like Dowsing believed that the king was doing immense harm to the nation through the Laudian policies of the 1630s. At the conclusion of this lengthy argument Tyndale's rhetorical flourish again received Dowsing's approval. He singled out with his pen Tyndale's words: 'The powers, to whom God hath committed the sword, shall give accounts for every drop of blood that is shed on the earth. Then shall their ignorance not excuse them, nor the saying of the hypocrites help them, My soul for yours, your grace shall do a meritorious deed'.⁸⁰

Obedience of a Christian Man holds an important place in Dowsing's library in that it was among the oldest works he owned. However, he does not seem to have treated the physical book with special reverence as part of a booklover's collection. He valued its content – its full-bore assault on the enemies of the Gospel. For Dowsing, the treasure lay not in the age of the book, but in the timeless truths it expressed.

That is not to say that Dowsing had no appreciation for history. On the contrary, his library suggests that he had a great love of historical writings. Marginalia in the parliamentary fast sermons regularly feature specific references to such ancient historians as Plutarch, Livy, Pliny the Elder and Josephus.⁸¹ One of the parliamentary preachers whose sermons Dowsing bought, Edmund Calamy, extolled the virtue of 'accurate' histories, arguing that Alexander the Great was only familiar with Achilles because of Homer. His point was that Parliament needed to be 'a better Homer, to Chronicle the passage of these late years'. When Dowsing read Calamy's words, he annotated them with the note, 'Achilies se[e] Alexanders lif[e] in Plutarch, Edit.1631.p.680'.⁸² Later in the same sermon Calamy employed the ancient story of 'Androchus of Rome', who reportedly enjoyed the friendship of a lion after removing a thorn from his paw.

⁸⁰ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1548), fol. 94v.

⁸¹ Morrill, "William Dowsing and the Administration of Iconoclasm," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 5.

⁸² Calamy, *Gods Free Mercy to England*, p. 5. In Dowsing's collection see IV.12.5.

Calamy used the illustration to remind Parliament of their friendship with God, ‘who hath plucked many thorns from our feet’. Rather than simply understanding the illustration, Dowsing felt the need to locate it. Next to the name ‘Androdus’ Dowsing writes, ‘Androdus, se Plynys naturall hist. edit.1635.pag.203.Book.8.Ch.16’.⁸³

Dowsing also cited frequently from Walter Raleigh’s *History of the World*. For example in William Bridge’s sermon, *Babylons Downfall* (1641), Dowsing added a precise reference to Raleigh to clarify a passing allusion from the preacher. When Bridge said that Parliament was called upon to ‘untie knots which no one else can untie’ Dowsing made this note in the margin: ‘Alexander: se Rawleys [Raleigh’s] Hist. B 4.c2.p.211’.⁸⁴ It is difficult to know which edition Dowsing was using, but the second chapter of Book Four in Raleigh’s *History* deals with Alexander’s journey through Phrygia. This brought him to the city of Gordium, where locals challenged him to untie an ancient knot to prove his worthiness for power. Not one to have his options restricted, Alexander cut through the proverbial ‘Gordian knot’ with his sword. Bridge encouraged Parliament to face the ‘Gordian knot’ of completing the Reformation in England, knowing that the only solution might be to slice through existing problems. Dowsing’s familiarity with this idiom of the ‘Gordian knot’ is not surprising. However, it is enlightening for two reasons: first, he had Raleigh’s volume close enough to hand to place the clarification in the margin; second, Dowsing was on the edge of Parliament’s blade as its reforming measures cut through the Gordian knot of the parlous state of England’s religion.

⁸³ Calamy, *Gods Free Mercy to England*, p. 44. In Dowsing’s collection see IV.12.44. Dowsing’s reference to Pliny is correct. See the Elder Pliny and Philemon Holland, *The Historie of the World: Commonly Called, the Naturall Historie of C. Plinius Secundus. Translated into English by Philemon Holland Doctor of Physicke. The First [-Second] Tome* (London: Printed by Adam Islip, and are to be sold by Iohn Grismond, in Ivy-lane at the signe of the Gun, 1635).

⁸⁴ Bridge, *Babylons Downfall*, p. 17. In Dowsing’s collection see IV.4.17.

This section began by indicating that Dowsing's library had three main divisions. To this point, the theological and historical sections of Dowsing's books have remained fairly separate. However John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* falls under a third category which blends history and 'applied' theology. Dowsing's citations in the parliamentary fast sermons testify to an encyclopaedic familiarity with Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. The book is difficult to categorize but scholars have either tended to treat Foxe's text as *Acts and Monuments*, the historical volume, or as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, the religious tract.⁸⁵ Dowsing seems to have embraced them both. Foxe certainly conveyed his own understanding of history, but his history is highly selective. Reading Foxe can be difficult because, as Thomas Freeman has noted, 'what appear to be Foxe's opinions or commentary can simply be passages transcribed from other authors and reprinted without acknowledgement'.⁸⁶ Yet, in the material undoubtedly written by Foxe it is clear that his brand of history was driven by theological concerns. *Acts and Monuments* was not just a history of the church, but a history of the church's finest exemplars. Dowsing cited from Foxe with complete confidence. The iconoclast saw no historical/religious tensions in the martyrologist.

Thomas Freeman has also asserted that while the influence of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was 'pervasive' among Reformed Christians it is also 'exceptionally hard to trace'.⁸⁷ Therefore, Dowsing's reading of Foxe helps to show how at least one puritan received and appropriated the book that was on bookshelves throughout England. He seems always to have had multiple editions to hand when reading, meaning that for Dowsing the book was indispensable.

⁸⁵ Thomas Betteridge, "Truth and History in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*," *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 146.

⁸⁶ Thomas S. Freeman, "Saint Peter Did Not Do Thus: Papal History in the Acts and Monuments," *John Foxe, Acts and Monuments [...]*. The Variorum Edition. [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield: 2004), Available at: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/> (accessed 13 August 2008).

⁸⁷ Thomas S. Freeman, "New Perspectives on an Old Book: The Creation and Influence of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 49, no. 2 (1998), p. 325.

It is interesting that Dowsing cited so often from the 1641 edition of *Acts and Monuments*. This edition contains a biography of Foxe now referred to as the 'Old Memoir'. The memoir is written by Foxe's son Simeon who remembered his father as a man 'burning with a sense of mission, contemplating a church half reformed, and deeply worried that his fellow countrymen would not prove equal to the task of justifying the trust which God had placed in them'.⁸⁸ There were tensions among puritans who disagreed over whether Foxe would have approved of rebellion against Charles I, but Simeon's 'memoir' at least helped to settle Foxe's 'non-conformist credentials' among the godly.⁸⁹

The vivid images that adorn the pages of *Acts and Monuments* appear to be at odds with the iconoclast's mission. Yet Margaret Aston's description of how 'text' and 'image' relate in *Acts and Monuments* helps to explain why the iconoclast may have been more comfortable with Foxe's illustrations:

No image stood on its own. Its assumed role was to present in complementary form the passage it was related to. Words, either in the shape of headings accompanying the woodcut, or vital statements or names set within them, are always present, an integral part of the complete score, the comprehension of which was a double act of reading and seeing.⁹⁰

Evidently, Dowsing did not see a problem with images of historical figures in private study as long as they were not presented as 'saints' to be venerated. Problems arose when images were used to facilitate communion with saints, whether in public or in private.

Dowsing cited Foxe in much the same way as he referred to other histories. The difference is that Foxe appears much more often in his annotations, simply because the subject

⁸⁸ David Loades, "The Early Reception of Foxe's Book of Martyrs," *John Foxe, Acts and Monuments* [...]. The Variorum Edition. [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield 2004). Available at: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/> (accessed 13 August 2008).

⁸⁹ Loades, "The Early Reception of Foxe's Book of Martyrs".

⁹⁰ Margaret Aston, "The Illustrations," *John Foxe, Acts and Monuments* [...]. The Variorum Edition. [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield 2004). Available at: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/> (accessed 13 August 2008).

matter of Dowsing's reading lends itself more to Foxe than Pliny the Elder. When Robert Harris juxtaposed the difficulty of 'approaching prelates' with the joy of 'approaching God', Dowsing remembered a scene from Foxe. He noted, 'se Acts and mon edit 1641v1.page232p.1024 edit 1610 p.162.b.L.26.721'.⁹¹ Interestingly, the iconoclast's reference takes the reader to a large illustration in Foxe's text. Volume 1, page 232 in the 1641 edition recounts the story of the excommunication of Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV (r. 1084-1105) by Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand). The dramatic picture portrays Henry, complete with bare feet and a shivering family, beseeching the pope to withdraw his sentence. Foxe's caption reads, 'Henricus the Emperor, with his wife and childe, barefoote and barelegged, waiting on Pope Hildebrand for three days and three nights before he could be suffered to come in'.⁹² Harris used the allusion to celebrate the Christian's free access to God through Christ. A Christian need not wait, and could 'speake whilst [he] will'. Dowsing's annotation shows he fully understood the nuances of Harris' reference.

Dowsing was not unique in having a personal library, or in treasuring his books. A sampling of wills from the Archdeaonries of Suffolk and Sudbury give a glimpse of how precious books were to their owners. In 1635 a gentleman named R. John Mill of Bury St. Edmunds left his son-in-law 'my Tremelius bible, and all of my divinity books ... with my gold

⁹¹ Robert Harris, *A Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons Assembled in Parliament, at a Publike Fast, May, 25. 1642. By Robert Harris, Batchelor of Divinity and Pastor of Hanwell. Oxon. Published by Order of That House* (London: Printed by M. F. for Iohn Bartlet, and are to be sold at the gilt Cup, neere S. Austins gate in Pauls Church-yard, 1642). In Dowsing's collection see IV.17.15. Dowsing mostly quotes from the 1610 and 1641 editions.

⁹² See John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of Matters Most Speciall and Memorable Happening in the Church, with an Universal Historie of the Same Wherein Is Set Forth at Large the Whole Race and Course of the Church from the Primitive Age to These Latter Times of Ours: With the Bloody Times, Horrible Troubles, and Great Persecutions against the Martyrs of Christ Sought and Wrought as Well by Heathen Emperors, as Now Lately Practised by Romish Prelates, Especially in This Realme of England and Scotland: Whereunto Are Annexed Certaine Additions of Like Persecution Which Have Happened in These Latter Times / Now Againe as It Was Recognised, Perused and Recommended to the Studious Reader by the Author Mr. Iohn Fox* (London: Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1641), vol. 1, book IV, p. 232.

ring and seal of arms'.⁹³ It is not insignificant that the one who received both precious gold and a treasured seal of arms should also receive the gentleman's books. Richard Cradock of Barrow, who bequeathed his soul to '3 persons of Trinity', specifically mentioned that Arthur Heigham of Barrow was to receive 'the book in my study entitled Dr. Whitakers against Stapleton in folio'.⁹⁴ Such a specific reference denotes value to Cradock, Heigham, or both. In Suffolk, Edward Duke of Ubbeston bequeathed bibles to several people in 1625. He also specifically mentioned leaving 'a book called Calvin's Institutions' to his friend Thomasine Alded.⁹⁵ Elizabeth Colman, a single woman of Parham willed that 'Mistress Anne Warner of Parham' was to receive 'a great bible and a new brass skillet'. She also left 'Mr. Smith's sermons' to her sister.⁹⁶ Finally, Giles Stanton of Stradbroke wanted to repay the 'honest trust and fidelity' of his friend Joseph Fletcher by leaving him a book entitled *Miscellanea*. The book must have been a significant gesture as it was intended to 'make recompense' for Fletcher's performance of 'legacies' (care) for the testator's wife, Anne. Stanton also left his son Robert a wide range of valuables, including 'bible, Mr. Perkins' works, & all tools belonging to shop'.⁹⁷ Thus, the listing of books among treasured possessions was common in seventeenth century England.

Even if Dowsing was not unique, he did give remarkable attention to his books. Dowsing's familiarity with his library raises the question of just how much time the yeoman farmer devoted to reading. Fortunately, Dowsing often recorded how much time he spent reading. At the end of *Manifold Wisdome*, he noted, 'I beg[an] this B[ook] a. 42. Dece[m]b[er] 19

⁹³ Nesta Evans, *The Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury 1630-1635* (Woodbridge: Boydell for the Suffolk Records Society, 1987), p. 366.

⁹⁴ Evans, *The Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury 1630-1635*, p. 113.

⁹⁵ Marion E. Allen, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk 1625-1626* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), p. 35.

⁹⁶ Allen, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk 1625-1626*, pp. 135-136. The 'great bible' possibly refers to an edition of the first officially authorised English Bible, first published during the reign of Henry VIII. 'Mr. Smith' might be the noted puritan preacher in Elizabethan London, Henry 'Silver Tongued' Smith (c. 1560-1591). See Ronald B. Jenkins, *Henry Smith: England's Silver-Tongued Preacher* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983).

⁹⁷ Allen, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk 1625-1626*, pp. 209-210.

& end d.22 2 Tim.2.7.’ The code is shorthand stating that he began the book on 19 December 1642 and finished it on the 22 December. It took him four days to read 173 pages. Thus with an average of just over forty-three pages a day, Dowsing seems to have been a steady reader. Considering the number of Scripture notations he made the speed is considerable. Cecil Deeds noted that Dowsing read *Divine Fancies* in just three days. This meant Dowsing read and annotated roughly sixty-eight pages a day. Though the speed was again steady, Deeds remarked that Dowsing ‘seems to have been a careful student’.⁹⁸ His final scripture reference in both books was II Timothy 2:7, ‘Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things’. Dowsing trusted that time spent with his books would be fruitful. He believed that God was ultimately responsible for his ability to understand and apply what he read.

IV. Conclusion

William Dowsing was a reader before he was an iconoclast. As a reader in seventeenth century England he was part of a growing trend in all classes of society. His hunger for knowledge led him to feast on the growing book market. Dowsing himself was evidence of the belief among puritans that improved literacy would translate into improved spirituality. He seems to have read at a level slightly above his station, finding arguments in original sources and citing them accurately. He streamlined his reading process to capture main points, rebuke false assertions and make plans for action.

This chapter has portrayed Dowsing with book and pen before he picked up hammer and chisel. Dowsing’s library was more than a collection of books; it was a collection of ideas. Those ideas were driving him to take action in the great cause of Reformation. The next chapter turns to six volumes which have only been alluded to thus far in this study. Dowsing’s treasured

⁹⁸ Deeds, “A Portraiture of William Dowsing,” p. 19.

collection of parliamentary fast sermons contains persistent themes which constitute a corporate rationale for iconoclasm among puritans. His annotations show how he engaged with that rationale. His actions show that he took it on as his own. More than treatises on the second commandment, the sermons are better viewed as comprehensive warnings against a failed Reformation. The proliferation of religious images was just one sign of how the church had compromised the Reformation in England. The preachers consistently argued that the purity of the Gospel and the security of the church were at stake in the 1640s. The sermons show even more clearly why William Dowsing felt he had to 'destroy' the fabric of churches in order to save the church.

Chapter 6

Preaching to the Converted: William Dowsing and the Parliamentary Fast Sermons

I. The Sermons as Exercises in Contrast

Dowsing placed a pen stroke next to an arresting word of warning in Edmund Calamy's sermon to the Long Parliament, *Gods Free Mercy to England* (1641): 'Give me leave to tell you, you have heard a sermon of two hours and therefore you have two hours more to answer for'.¹ The Suffolk puritan would not have read these as idle words. He considered himself duty-bound to obey when a preacher rightly divided the Word of Truth. In addition to noting '2 Tim. 2.7' at the end of sermons, the iconoclast also wrote 'Rev. 1.3', reminding himself to 'Consider what [was said]' and that blessing came to him 'that readeth, ... the words of this prophecy, and keep those which are written therein: for the time is at hand'.² Such citations reflected the attitude of many puritans in the 1640s. Although numerous parliamentarians might have taken a more nuanced view, Dowsing's collection of sermons records the parliamentary preachers' declaration that God had given England an ultimatum. According to their rhetoric, the civil war had given the country a choice between completed Reformation and certain ruin.

The parliamentary fast sermons represent puritan efforts to interpret their world via the Word. Dowsing's annotations in the sermons reflect one layman's attempt to follow arguments

¹ Calamy, *Gods Free Mercy to England*, p. 50. Because this chapter is more closely focused on Dowsing's program of sermon reading it will also include in citations the sermon's preaching date (pr.) and Dowsing's reading date (r.) if known. The additional information for Calamy's sermon is: pr. 23 February 1641; r. 10 October 1642. In Dowsing's collection see IV.12.50. See Appendix One for a chart detailing Dowsing's sermon reading before and during his iconoclastic campaign.

² For example see Dowsing's annotation on the final page of John Arrowsmith's *Covenant-avenging Sword Brandished* (pr. 25 January 1642; r. 28 April 1643), VI.2.28. The draft of Dowsing's letter to Matthew Newcomen is recorded on a blank page of the very next sermon, Jeremiah Whittaker's *Eirenopoios, Christ the Settlement of Unsettled Times* (pr. 25 January 1642; 2 May 1643). Dowsing's notes on the final page of John Arrowsmith's sermon may reveal his motivation for writing to Newcomen. The final page of Arrowsmith's sermon refers to the Lord granting an English victory in 'Mussleburgh'. Dowsing's letter to Newcomen (transcribed just one page over in the bound collection) cites 'victory against the Scots in Muselborough ... the same day that ... images [were] burnt [in London]' as evidence of the Lord favouring iconoclasm in England.

presented by some of the most widely known preachers of the day. The annotations also draw readers' attention to sections which he deemed noteworthy as he read. The passages Dowsing marked reveal several recurring themes in the sermons. This chapter argues that the themes in Dowsing's collection of sermons provide the framework for the corporate puritan rationale for reform in the 1640s. The annotations also demonstrate that Dowsing understood this rationale as he entered into his iconoclastic campaign.

Although Dowsing's collection of sermons occupied a central place in his library, there is a danger of overstating what the sermons and his annotations can disclose. There is a difference between how Dowsing viewed his collection and how modern readers might view it. Dowsing did not necessarily treat the volumes as concise statements of the puritan rationale for Reformation or iconoclasm. It appears that Dowsing was interested in them mostly because they brought Scripture to bear on current political and religious crises. However, Dowsing's original intention in purchasing the sermons does not negate the fact that they contain arguments for Reformation which made iconoclasm seem obligatory.

The iconoclast's other reading material, discussed in Chapter Five, implies that he engaged with theological matters for at least two decades before the Long Parliament convened. Thus, the parliamentary sermons were not Dowsing's first introduction to theological controversy.³ However, what the sermons do provide is proof of Dowsing's exposure to precise statements of the theology supporting Reformation (doctrines), ways to rebuff objections (answers) and the actions that this theology commanded (uses). There was not necessarily a one-to-one corollary between what he read and what he did. Nevertheless, the sheer force of the arguments *en masse* must have added to Dowsing's zeal for iconoclasm. Reading the sermons meant he could walk into his iconoclastic campaign with a robust conscience.

³ See 5.I above for examples of Dowsing's reading at a younger age.

Previous chapters have served a strategic purpose, affording the opportunity to see the theological concerns which drove a quiet puritan layman to undertake one of the more controversial campaigns of the 1640s. The answer to the question of his rationale for iconoclasm is as theological as it is biographical. Reading provided him with access to puritan Reformed theology as it took shape in the century following the Reformation. Parliamentary sermons exposed him to how this theology should be applied in war-torn England. While this study of the sermons is not primarily intended to illuminate private shades of Dowsing's psyche, the sermons do show us the sweeping public themes that drove the puritan movement – and Dowsing along with it.

Since Dowsing is remembered as an iconoclast it is tempting to search the sermon texts only for the preachers' references to images and idolatry. Indeed, as the evidence will show, the preachers certainly issued copious warnings about the dangers of images. However, iconoclasm was simply an implication of a much larger system of thought. Iconoclasm found its urgency, not in the visceral satisfaction it brought to Reformed worshippers, but in the overall economy of Reformed worship. Part of that rationale was the need for the immediate eradication of worship not consistent with 'the patterne in the Mount'.⁴ Dowsing embraced the core issues and that is why he embraced iconoclasm.

For the historian, Dowsing's relationship to the sermons is distinctive because the preachers called for the kind of actions that Dowsing eventually took. It would be an overstatement to suggest that Dowsing used the sermons as a type of blueprint from which he planned his iconoclasm. On the other hand, when Francis Cheynell urged Parliament to let 'the

⁴ Samuel Faireclough, *The Troublers Troubled, or Achan Condemned, and Executed. A Sermon, Preached before Sundry of the Honourable House of Commons at Westminster, April, 4. 1641. By Samuel Fairecloth, Pastor of the Congregation of Ketton in Suffolke* (London: Printed by R. Cotes, for Henry Overton, and are to be sold at his Shop at the entrance of Popes-head-Alley, out of Lumbard street, 1641), pr. 4 April 1641; r. unknown; IV.1.30. The 'patterne of the Mount' is equivalent to puritan calls for Reformation 'according to the Word of God'.

Graven Images be beaten to pieces and the hires thereof burnt with fire', Dowsing was the brand of instrument Cheynell had in mind for the beating.⁵

As a body of work the sermons contain persistent themes which underscore the importance of 'pure worship'. They advocated what Calvin referred to as 'spiritual worship', free from human innovation.⁶ In true Ramist fashion, preachers routinely set positive calls for reform alongside their negative counterparts. In every message, provisions had proscriptions; comforts were never far removed from conviction. Divine blessing found greater glory when draped in front of the prospect of divine retribution. The programme to institute true 'Reformed' worship required the annihilation of false 'Anti-Christian' worship. Righteous patriots thwarted the plans of papist traitors. In order to highlight this characteristic, this chapter expresses the dominant themes in Dowsing's collection of sermons as a series of dialectics.

The parliamentary sermons are exercises in contrast. Not only do core themes emerge as dialectics, but the preaching style also embodies clashing elements. Just as the writer of Lamentations channelled untamed suffering through the conduit of careful poetry, the parliamentary preachers conducted their fury through a clear-headed sermon structure.⁷ For example, Simeon Ashe explained that 'My text [Psalm 9.9] contains one intire Proposition, the Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed in times of trouble'.⁸ Rather than immediately delving into matters of religious controversy of concern to the godly, he first pointed to the structure of

⁵ Francis Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum. In a Sermon at Vvestminster, before the Honorable House of Commons, on the 31. Of May 1643. The Solemne Day of Their Monethly Fast. By Francis Cheynell Late Fellow of Merton College in Oxford. Printed and Published by Order of the House of Commons* (London: Printed for Samuel Gellibrand, at the Brazen Serpent in Pauls Church-yard, 1643); pr. 31 May 1643; r. unknown; VI.9.29.

⁶ See Chapter Three (3.I.i) for a discussion of Calvin's concept of 'spiritual worship'.

⁷ One notable exception to this rule was the sermon preached by Samuel Rutherford in January 1644. Although the Scots were known for following form to a fault, Rutherford delivered a 'disjointed and passionate exhortation' which 'made a number of points in a very blunt manner'. See John Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 165.

⁸ Simeon Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed in a Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at Their Solemne Fast, March 30, 1642 / by Simeon Ash* (London: Printed for Edward Brewster and John Burroughs, 1642); pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643; IV.14.4.

the proposition, '[in which] the Subject and the predicate are considerable ... the Subject hath much sowreness ... the Predicate comprizeth more sweetnesse'. He supported his thesis by exploring three doctrines, which Dowsing wrote on the title page of the printed sermon: 'Opposition and trouble may be in this world the portion of God's children; The Lord will be a refuge in time of trouble; The Lord Jehovah is an incomparable refuge to his oppressed people'. His stated aim for each doctrine was to '1. Interpret the words; 2. Confirme the Doctrine; 3. Endeavour to put all into practice by application'.⁹ He then anticipated 'objections' and answered them with 'reasons'. At first glance, this kind of preaching seems to set structure above the passions of the preacher. However, the fixed markers allowed for emotional preaching that was not enslaved by emotion. The structure kept Ashe within Reformed boundaries but did not prevent him from confronting a stalled Parliament in 1642 saying, 'you shew your teeth but do not bite'.¹⁰

Samuel Fairclough also successfully used the calmness of the plain style to deliver disturbing texts. When he employed the method to expound the story of Achan in Joshua 7, the results were penetrating. Fairclough stated that his intention was to 'cast the lots' (beside which Dowsing dutifully notes Proverbs 16:33) in the 'lap of Commons' that they might judge who have been the 'Achans in England'. Fairclough used the deliberate method to direct his growing intensity. He sought to expound the meaning of:

First, concerning the Babylonish garment. Secondly the Wedge of Gold. Thirdly, Joshua. Fourthly, Achan. Concerning the Babylonianish garment, this is my query, whether you conceive not the setting forth, and publishing of Babylonish doctrines, Babylonish gestures, Pictures, and Altars, in Gods house, be not as an accursed thing as to his a Babylonish Garment in a private tent as an Israelite.¹¹

⁹ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.4-5.

¹⁰ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.56.

¹¹ Fairclough, *The Troublers Troubled* (pr. 4 April 1641; r. unknown), IV.1.14.

The ‘doctrine’ was that God often places things under the ban that might seem attractive to man. The ‘use’ was that the Achans who had recently run roughshod over the church, placing ‘accursed’ things in the house of God, must be stopped. The rather transparent implication was that if the House of Commons remained indifferent to England’s idolatry they would be as guilty as Achan’s family – who were not spared when the men of Israel stoned the ‘idolater’.

Ashe’s and Fairclough’s sermons are emblematic of the parliamentary sermon corpus. To some degree, they all followed the plain style of preaching. There were variations that bordered on deviation, but ‘failure to use the method at all was very rare’.¹² William Perkins’ method of building a sermon on a scheme of doctrines, reasons and uses was readily embraced by puritan clergy in and out of Parliament.¹³ The essence of the method was to ‘give the sense and understanding’ of a text from the ‘Canonicall Scriptures’, from which the preacher should ‘collect a few and profitable points of doctrine’ and then ‘apply the doctrines, rightly collected, to the life and manners of men, in a simple and plaine speech’.¹⁴ By the 1640s preachers used the method as a proven formula for thoroughly mining their chosen texts. After one lengthy exposition, Matthew Newcomen commented, ‘Thus you have this doctrine ... as fully as my weak thoughts, in the little time I had to bestow upon this work, were able to comprehend it’.¹⁵ Parliamentary sermons were effective because the content was ‘plain’ and did not need to compete with the structure for attention. The preachers laboured to fill the structure with a host of illustrations from historical and contemporary events. They used the ‘doctrines’ to set forth

¹² Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 141.

¹³ McKim, “The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins’ Theology,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* XVI, no. 4 (1985), p. 510.

¹⁴ William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, p. 148.

¹⁵ Matthew Newcomen, *Jerusalems Watch-Men the Lords Remembrancers a Sermon Preached at the Abbie at Westminster before Both Houses of Parliament, and the Assembly of Divines Upon Their Solemn Fast, July 7, 1643 / by Matth. Nevvcomen* (London: Printed by M. F. for Christopher Meredith, 1643); pr. 7 July 1643; r. unknown; VI.14.18.

the best in Reformed theology and they destabilized the most pervasive objections with their 'reasons'. Finally, they left no room for misunderstanding in their 'uses'.

The power of the sermons can be explained by their underlying philosophy as well. The preachers engaged a much grander scheme than the simple conveyance of information. Wilson rightly explained that the effectiveness of the sermons lay

in the parallelism between the biblical text which gave substance to the 'doctrine' and the situation to which it might be applied. In a latent sense the scriptural precedents had been baptized in Christ and transformed by his coming, so that the puritan might understand his age to be simply a living out of divine intentions.¹⁶

The structure of the sermons made it simple for Dowsing to record the preachers' doctrines and uses. Moreover, the doctrines drew clear parallels between biblical texts and contemporary events. He could step into the 'divine intentions' without wrestling with the preacher's method. He benefitted from the method which was 'thought to render the texts sufficiently comprehensible to be both universal and credible'.¹⁷

Ideally, the plain style preaching method would produce sermons that simply reflected the power of the chosen text. Like the verses Dowsing penned in the preface to his iconoclasm journal, the preachers' chosen texts were most often selected from the Old Testament. Looking beyond Dowsing's private collection to the entire corpus of printed sermons 162 of the 218 were based on Old Testament passages. Of these 162, 39 were from Psalms, 25 from Isaiah, 10 from Jeremiah, 10 from Zechariah and 6 from I Samuel. The other 72 messages came from texts scattered across the remaining 34 books of the Old Testament.¹⁸ When only Dowsing's collection is in view, the numbers are even more striking. Of the thirty-five sermons he read before and during the period of iconoclasm, only five had New Testament texts as the focal

¹⁶ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 145.

¹⁷ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, p. 165.

¹⁸ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, pp. 149-150.

passage.¹⁹ Yet even when the preachers chose a text from the New Testament, their references and illustrations mostly came from Old Testament verses and events. They had greater ease applying Old Testament imagery to their situation. After all, God dealt with Israel as an actual ‘nation’ with ‘kings’ and ‘priests’ who constantly needed to repent.

The following analysis of the sermons explores themes which framed Dowsing’s iconoclasm and represent a basic outline of his thought. In each case, iconoclasm played a tactical role in the Reformed strategy to seek God’s favour, secure England, purify worship and ultimately vindicate the godly cause. Here the technical execution of sermon method is not in view. Since the structure of each sermon is virtually identical, there is little need to mention it further. Dowsing is everywhere present in the following analysis since each sermon quotation in the following section was emphasized in some way by the iconoclast as he read the sermons. The goal is to sit with Dowsing as he read the texts and to capture the ideas that captured him.

II. A Thematic Analysis of Dowsing’s Collection

Dowsing gathered a powerful set of ideas when he collected the parliamentary sermons. Persistent themes leap from every page of the text as ministers continually return to topics of concern for the godly. The recurring themes become even more discernable in this examination of passages marked by the iconoclast as he read. These passages and Dowsing’s marginalia show Dowsing taking note of issues that were noteworthy for the cause of Reformation. John Wilson explored a large portion of the sermons preached from 1640-1648 and identified ‘Covenanted Salvation’, ‘The sins and signs of the times’, ‘The means of Salvation’ and a

¹⁹ Revelation 14.8 in Bridge’s *Babylons Downfall* (1641); Revelation 2.2-3 in Joseph Caryl’s *The Workes of Ephesus Explained* (1642); Matthew 10.34 in John Arrowsmith’s *The Covenant-avenging Sword Brandished* (1642); I Corinthians 1.27 in Corbet’s *Gods Providence* (1642); Luke 18.6-8 in Harris’s *A Sermon Preached* (1642).

‘Collective Eschatology’, as core premises on which the sermons were built.²⁰ While Wilson’s work is invaluable in its description of the whole of parliamentary preaching from 1640-1648, the present attempt differs in two ways. First, limiting the scope to sermons Dowsing purchased and read before and during his iconoclastic campaign automatically sets it apart from Wilson’s research. Furthermore, this section quotes only those passages marked by the iconoclast as he read. Second, this project focuses more intently on iconoclasm as a specific application drawn from themes in the sermons. Here four central themes are expressed as a series of dialectics, each juxtaposing two alternatives that puritans faced in the 1640s. A brief theological discussion of each theme precedes attention to Dowsing’s reading of the texts.

i. Divine retribution or divine blessing

One fundamental belief supported the parliamentary preaching program: God had a vested interest in England and he would make it holy by any means necessary. English Christians had long believed that their homeland was ‘the peculiar place of God’.²¹ In the sixteenth century the protestant martyr Hugh Latimer claimed that ‘God hath shewed himself God of England, or rather the English God’.²² Among Long Parliament preachers, Richard Vines voiced Latimer’s belief. Dowsing marked the paragraph in which Vines preached, ‘if ever in any great business God did intwist his owne interest with ours, it is now in our case’.²³ Puritans assumed that God favoured their cause, but believed he had also seen the abominations committed in the English church under William Laud’s leadership. Therefore, the reality of

²⁰ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, pp. 166ff.

²¹ Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England*, p. 4.

²² Quoted in Collinson, *Birthpangs of Protestant England*, p. 4.

²³ Richard Vines, *Calebs Integrity in Following the Lord Fully, in a Sermon Preached at St. Margarets Westminster, before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Solemne and Publick Fast, Novemb: 30th. 1642. By Richard Vines, Mr. Of Arts of Magd. Colledge in Camb: And Minister of the Gospell at Weddington in the County of Warr* (London: Printed by G. M. for Abel Roper, at the Signe of of [sic] the Sun against St. Dunstons Church in Fleete-streete, M. DC. XLII, 1642); pr. 30 November 1642; r. 18 December 1642; IV.28.13.

God's eminent judgment dominated the sermons. For the godly community, divine retribution was the logical consequence of God's holiness. At the same time, God's mercy gave hope of divine blessings. Much of the evident puritan anxiety in the 1640s came from a belief that God's precious England had scorned his mercy and offended his holiness. In this context, many puritans prepared themselves for his retribution while openly beseeching his blessing.

In the Reformed tradition the 'anger of God', or *ira Dei*, was routinely treated as an anthropomorphism which allowed humanity to identify with God's attitude toward sin. As Calvin argued, God is not 'swayed by passions' like sinful people.²⁴ The parliamentary preachers surely believed that God was 'angry' with all of England. However, their 'doctrines' and 'uses' show them to be in step with the Reformed tradition as they recognised certain kinds of divine anger: general, temporal and everlasting.²⁵ While 'general' anger referred to God's basic aversion to sin and 'everlasting' anger indicated the eternal condemnation of the reprobate, 'temporal' anger 'stands over and against the sins both of the wicked and the godly and is revealed in the earthly punishments meted out to sinners'.²⁶ In Reformed Orthodoxy, God's temporal anger toward the elect came from the heart of a father who disciplines his children out of love. His temporal anger toward the wicked revealed an intention to punish. The theological distinction between the two was clear, yet the temporal display of these two intents was virtually indistinguishable. Both the godly and the wicked suffered when God judged a nation.

Retribution and blessing were constant possibilities in the mind of a seventeenth-century puritan like Dowsing. While true blessings were reserved for the elect, the godly were not immune to the side-effects of a wrathful visitation. Sometime between 1641 and 1642 Dowsing

²⁴ Calvin's Commentary on Genesis 11.6, quoted in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. III, p. 581.

²⁵ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. III, p. 582.

²⁶ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. III, pp. 582-583.

marked Samuel Fairclough's observations that 'none of all Israel had the Garment but Achan, yet God seth the Children of Israel committed a trespasse'.²⁷ On the front page of Stephen Marshall's *Meroz Cursed* (1641), Dowsing inscribed Marshall's warning that 'All people are cursed or blessed, according as they do or doe not joine their strength and give their best assistance to the Lords people against their enemys'.²⁸ Marshall's text for the day was the Song of Deborah in Judges 5.23, 'Curse ye Meroz (said the Angell of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty'. The sermon, which Marshall preached over sixty times, was so provocative that Alexandra Walsham claims it 'may have been one spur to attacks on Essex papists'.²⁹ Many of the preachers based their sermons on similar themes. In March 1643 Dowsing read Obadiah Sedwicke's sermon on Jeremiah 4.3 entitled 'England's preservation or A sermon discovering the onely way to prevent destroying judgments'.³⁰ Dowsing also marked Simeon Ashe's counterpoint which asked Parliament to 'Be confident that there is a full Harvest behind [present troubles] that will abundantly recompense all your great labours and adventures for God and his people'.³¹ As Dowsing marked these passages in 1643, he saw preachers painting a scene of English Christians walking a razor's edge between full-bodied revival and out-and-out desolation.

²⁷ Fairclough, *The Troublers Troubled* (pr. 4 April 1641; r. unknown), IV.1.14. The exact date of Dowsing's reading is not clear. However, since the sermon was preached in 1641, it would be consistent with his habit to purchase and read it within a year of the preaching date. This would easily place the reading date sometime before his iconoclasm began in December 1643.

²⁸ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (pr. 23 February 1641; r. 9 October 1642), IV.13.

²⁹ Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p. 138.

³⁰ Obadiah Sedgwick, *Englands Preservation or, a Sermon Discovering the Onely Way to Prevent Destroying Judgements: Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at Their Last Solemne Fast, Being on May, 25. 1642. By Obadiah Sedgwick Batchelour in Divinity and Minister of Coggeshall in Essex. Published by Order of That House* (London: Printed by R. B. for Samuel Gellibrand, at the Brazen Serpent in Pauls Church-Yard, 1642); pr. 25 May 1642; r. 25 March 1643; IV.18.

³¹ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14. Epistle Dedicatory.

Dowsing set his pen in motion when expositors aimed threats of retribution squarely at the wicked, such as when Ashe thundered an imprecation from Psalm 7.12, ‘God is angry with the wicked every day, if he turn not he will whet his sword, he hath bent his bow and made it ready, he hath prepared for him instruments of death, he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors’.³² Preachers favoured the imprecatory psalms when accentuating the doom awaiting the enemies of Reformation. However, Dowsing also noted Ashe’s admonition that ‘Heaven (the God of Heaven I meane) is incensed against *us* by our continued and multiplied abominations’.³³ Ashe carries on, listing curses, oaths and profaning the Lord’s day as ‘abominations’ into which some of the faithful had fallen. Indeed, according to puritans like Dowsing, temptation was rife in England and the nation needed a remedy.

The root issue in the discussion of blessing and retribution was sin, in all its multifarious forms. Dowsing scored the margin when Thomas Case preached, ‘[as a nation] England ... hath robbed all her neighbouring nations of their master-sins: France of her lightness, Spain of her pride, Germany of her drunkenesse, Italy of her revenge, and Venice of her wantonnesse’.³⁴ No one brought this perceived truth to the House of Commons with more zeal than Edmund Calamy. In his Epistle Dedicatory to *England’s Looking Glasse*, Calamy employed the story of an ancient soldier who cursed the walls of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus Phocas saying, ‘Though thou build’st thy walls as high as Heaven, sin is within, and this will easily batter down thy walls’. He co-opted and spiritualized the anecdote by likening sin to ‘a traitor in our bosoms that will open

³² Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.11.

³³ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.15.

³⁴ Case, *Two Sermons Lately Preached* (pr. uncertain date in 1642; r. 1 November 1642), IV.7.12.

the gates to the enemy'.³⁵ As the budding iconoclast sat reading Calamy's text on a spring day in 1643, he drew his pen down an entire paragraph in which the London minister warned of danger:

Oh, let not our hearts be harder than the rocks, worser than Devils! Oh, England, fear the God of Heaven and Earth! Oh you House of Commons, tremble and sin not. Most in the world sin and tremble not. Do you tremble and sin not? We are all in God's hand, like a flye in the paw of a roaring Lion, as the clay in the hand of the Potter. Consider the advantages God hath us at, and our dependence upon him and let us not dare to sin against him.³⁶

Calamy based his sermon on Jeremiah's visit to the 'potter's house' in Jeremiah 18.7-10. The text records God reminding the prophet that God held Israel as a potter holds clay, fashioning and destroying as he wills. While painstakingly exploring the nuances of the text, he also applied a more general meaning of the passage to the state of affairs in England. Then, casting a glance toward historical evidence, he wondered if the recent 'silencing [by natural death or persecution]' of godly ministers might have been a harbinger of the Potter's judgment. Dowsing marked Calamy's argument:

Augustine was taken away by death immediately before the sacking of Hippo where he lived. Paraus before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther a little before warres came into Germany, as he himself did fore-signify at his death. Thus the death of Saint Ambrose was a forerunner of the ruin of Italy. The many reverend preachers, the Horsemen of Israel, that in these few years are gone to their graves in peace, are as so many blazing Comets to portend our ruine.³⁷

Calamy's message rang with the familiar tone of providentialist preaching in the 1640s. Alexandra Walsham claimed that as Calamy addressed the Long Parliament, he merely '[echoed] a pessimistic message which had been resounding in the ears of city audiences for nearly a

³⁵ Edmund Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse, Presented in a Sermon Preached before the Honorable House of Commons at Their Late Solemne Fast, December 22, 1641 by Edmund Calamy* (London: Printed by I. Raworth for Chr. Meredith, 1642); pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643; IV.11.Epistle Dedicatory.

³⁶ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.8.

³⁷ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.15.

century'.³⁸ Indeed, Calamy did not only suggest that England deserved judgment because of the sins of the wicked; he also suspected that God would hold the godly accountable for their apathy toward sin in others. He quoted Augustine, 'Lord deliver me from other men's sinnes, which for want of mourning and grieving for, I have made mine own'.³⁹ He feared that such an attitude reflected indifference toward the holiness of God. Calamy insisted, 'in all the sins we commit we must not so much consider the sin that is committed, as the God against whom it is committed'.⁴⁰ Calamy believed the godly owed more diligence to 'The eternall God ... before whom the Great, as well as the small must appear on that great day of Judgement'.⁴¹ Yet, to balance Walsham's claim, the passages Dowsing marked in Calamy's message were not thoroughly pessimistic. Not one to leave his audience in despair, Calamy also held out hope in the form of 'wrath-charming Repentance'.⁴² With palpable care for his hearers, the shepherd of St. Mary Aldermanbury asserted, 'If that kingdom against which God hath threatened destruction, repent and turn from their evill, God will not only destroy that Kingdom, but also build and plant it'.⁴³ Dowsing also inked lines alongside sections in other Calamy sermons as he developed this theme to support the reform of worship, preaching: 'If God should shew us mercy, this mercy will be accursed unto us if we be not humbled and reformed'.⁴⁴

Edward Corbet, who would present damning testimony against William Laud at his 1644 trial, chose to emphasize the hand of God working for the elect, through the schemes of the

³⁸ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, p. 283. Walsham rightly claims that providentialist preaching in the Long Parliament had 'recognizable prototypes' among Edwardian reformers such as John Hooper, Hugh Latimer, and Thomas Lever. See *Providence in Early Modern England*, p. 284.

³⁹ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.32.

⁴⁰ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.27.

⁴¹ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.7.

⁴² Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.43.

⁴³ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.3.

⁴⁴ Calamy, *Gods Free Mercy to England* (pr. 23 February 1641; r. 10 October 1642), IV.12.45.

wicked.⁴⁵ Dowsing's pen highlighted Corbet's belief that 'all the calamities that are fallen upon this Land shall turn to the benefit of God's people' in such a way that 'Antichrist shall concur to his own subversion, and the very enemies of truth shall advance it, then that scarlet whore who hath so long made the nations drunk with her fornications, shall fall'.⁴⁶ It is significant that Corbet saw God working through adversaries, not just in spite of them. Jeremiah Whittaker agreed that God regularly accomplished his purposes through apparent adversity. The result was that the godly should expect upheaval in the process of Reformation. In March 1643 Dowsing etched beside Whittaker's claim: 'Just as God deals with the soules of persons, so with States and Nations ... it is Gods way to carry on Reformation through the midst of concussions ... no Reformation came into any Church or Kingdome without some kind of shaking'.⁴⁷ The year Dowsing read the sermon was certainly one of 'concussions' for Parliament. Royalist forces shook parliamentary confidence by securing victories at the Battles of Adwalton Moor and Roundaway Down as well as by retaking Lichfield and Gainsborough.⁴⁸

Puritans generally trusted that God would bless England by directing the machinations of the wicked for sacred purposes. However, this did not mean that they could permit evil to

⁴⁵ Mark Robert Bell, "Corbet, Edward (1601x3–1658)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6286> (accessed 24 October 2008). Corbet gave evidence of recent crucifixes that had been erected with Laud's approval. From his cell in the Tower, Laud had refused to grant Corbet a 'living' in Chartham in 1643. Memories of the insult were still fresh and may have added vigour to Corbet's testimony.

⁴⁶ Edward Corbet, *Gods Providence, a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons at Their Late Solemne Fast, Decemb. 28, 1642, in S. Margarets Church at Westminster by Ed. Corbett* (London: Printed by Tho. Badger, for Robert Bostock, 1642); pr. 28 December 1642; r. unknown; IV.30.13. Dowsing purchased the sermon on 5 April 1643. However, the reading date was trimmed away when the sermons were bound. It was rare for Dowsing to allow a large lapse of time between purchase and reading. Thus, the sermon was probably read before or during the iconoclastic campaign. Corbet's was one of the few sermons based on a New Testament passage. He chose I Corinthians 1.27 as a text that would demonstrate God's providence over the affairs of men: 'God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise'.

⁴⁷ Jeremiah Whittaker, *Eirenopoios, Christ the Settlement of Unsettled Times in a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Publicke Fast in Margarets Church at Westminster, the 25. Of January / by Jeremiah Whittaker* (London: Printed for John Bellamie, 1642); pr. 25 January 1642; r. 2 May 1643; VI.3.

⁴⁸ See P. R. Newman, *Atlas of the English Civil War* (London: Routledge, 1998) and Wanklyn and Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War, 1642-1646*).

increase so that good might come of it. Dowsing's letter to Matthew Newcomen sheds light on Dowsing's desire for action. Dowsing insisted that Parliament needed to take immediate measures against 'blasphemous crucifixes, all superstitious pictures and reliques of popery'. The fact that God vindicated England during 'Edward VI's reign' only when 'the reformation was wrought in London and images burnt', was proof that the present situation called for specific deeds.⁴⁹ The godly saw the Edwardian Reformation as a missed opportunity to permanently secure reformation in England. He was the young king who 'had purged [idolatry] as Josiah had purged' and represented the best hopes for Reformation in the sixteenth century.⁵⁰ Yet, as Diarmaid MacCulloch demonstrated, another sentiment began to emerge shortly after Edward's death. Edward's reforms were 'a version of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand where the end of the story had gone wrong'.⁵¹ Although marred by a return to Catholicism under Mary I, gains made under Edward's rule served as a model for godly laity like Dowsing. His letter to Newcomen suggests that the Suffolk farmer envisioned his iconoclasm as a solution for the national case of conscience created by popish worship. Furthermore, he believed that iconoclasm could be the weight that tipped the divine scales toward blessing and away from retribution.

In many of the sermons Dowsing annotated there was an implied three-fold solution to the crisis of divine retribution. First, the church needed to sustain right belief. Scripture, as interpreted by Reformed orthodoxy, reigned supreme in the preachers' propositions and was the measure of all truth. Second, the church needed to be marked by right action. Simply put, right

⁴⁹ Taken from the draft copy on first blank page in *Eirenopoios* (pr. 25 January 1642; r. 2 May 1643), VI.3.

⁵⁰ Aston, *The King's Bedpost*, p. 34.

⁵¹ MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*, p. 151. MacCulloch quotes Thomas Lever, who said that during Edward's reign, 'Meat was provided for the Commons of England, and ready to have been delivered: but when they were bidden to sit down in quietness, they rose up in rebellion, and have lost all the cheer of that feast'.

action equalled vigorous Reformation according to the Word. But the third component brought certain logistical concerns along with it. The missing component could be summed up in the words ‘right now’. The preachers drank deeply from the cocktail of orthodoxy, orthopraxy and immediacy. Since Reformation was right, delayed action indicated that Parliament had placed political concerns above a righteous cause. Compromise to that degree virtually invited the judgment of God. Immediate action, born out of right belief, was the only right action. Examples abound, but Samuel Fairclough’s admonition from 4 April 1641 captured the pervasive mood. Dowsing marked Fairclough’s warning, ‘Oh what danger there is then in one dais delay, when if our speed in execution bee not sooner than God’s, we come too late’.⁵²

Dowsing’s frequent markings also captured tensions within the Reformed concept of divine retribution. Often in the sermons it is difficult to distinguish between the working of God’s providence and the works of the ‘Devill’. Dowsing scored the margin as Simeon Ashe described ‘How hell and earth are combined against us because we endeavour Reformation’.⁵³ Ashe’s lament seems to have overlooked Corbet’s argument that ‘the very enemies of truth shall advance it’. However, the two preachers are actually preaching the same truth with varying emphases. While Corbet ushered the listener into ultimate victory behind the curtain of God’s providence, Ashe stressed the ugly circumstances on this side of the veil. Puritan providentialists held both truths together and embraced the tension. Without undermining God’s control, Ashe could still proclaim that ‘The Devill roars because his kingdom is battered. Papists and Atheists rage because Popery and profanenesse is opposed’.⁵⁴ At the same time, Ashe warned that the ‘rage’ of the ‘Atheists’ paled in comparison to the judgment God could bring if England did not put away ‘strange gods’. Ashe feared that ‘if this not be done then the Lord will lay on more

⁵² Fairclough, *The Troublers Troubled* (pr. 4 April 1641; r. unknown), IV.1.48. See note 61.

⁵³ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.15.

⁵⁴ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.15.

weight, he will punish seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more'.⁵⁵

Surprisingly, Ashe's alarming comments came in a sermon designed to paint God as a safe 'refuge'. This once again underscores the puritan tendency to horrify the audience with consequences of disobedience so that divine blessings would shine with more appeal. Dowsing highlighted Ashe's thrice-repeated, seven-fold, punishment from God in March 1643, just nine months before his iconoclastic campaign began. However, he also captured Ashe's attempt to set God's blessings against the horrifying backdrop of divine judgment. God offered a 'harbour' in which 'the heart hath the goodliest prospects, the fullest provisions, the safest protections'.⁵⁶ Stephen Marshall also extolled the beauty of God's refuge, claiming that Christians were '[never safer] than when your hearts and hands are employed in his service'.⁵⁷ These words, marked by Dowsing, must have been an encouragement to the iconoclast:

Do his work faithfully and there shall no evil befall you, nor any plague come nigh your dwelling, a thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but till God put your Name in, till God say to plague, or pox, or fever, or Traitors, or death ceize upon such a Nobleman, such a Parliament-man, they can never touch you.⁵⁸

Once again showing the puritan conviction that God was 'on their side', Marshall encouraged Parliament to 'set your hearts to do God's work, God hath set his heart upon you to deliver you, and he can do it'.⁵⁹ Although we cannot know exactly what Dowsing was thinking when verbally assailed by the Fellows of Pembroke, his confidence likely owed much to things he read in the sermons. When the learned men made threats, Dowsing may have remembered words he

⁵⁵ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.16-17.

⁵⁶ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.26.

⁵⁷ Stephen Marshall, *A Peace-Offering to God. A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons Assembled in Parliament, at Their Publique Thanksgiving, September 7. 1641. For the Peace Concluded between England and Scotland. / by Stephen Marshall, Batchelour in Divinity, Minister of Finchingfield in Essex. Published by Order of the Said House* (London: Printed by T.P. and M.S. for Samuel Man, dwelling in St. Pauls Church-yard, at the signe of the Swan, 1641); pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643; II.3.15.

⁵⁸ Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.15-16.

⁵⁹ Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.22.

marked in Ashe's exhortation, 'God hath made promises to deliver thee from evill work, from whatever might hurt thee, and thou needst not fear that which cannot hurt thee'.⁶⁰

The passages help to frame iconoclasm as one means of assuaging the *ira Dei* against England and inviting his blessings. Dowsing regularly marked sections that spoke to the terror of God's judgment and the security of his care. He was one man who sought security by setting his 'heart to God's work' even in the face of opposition. In the words of Marshall's *A Peace Offering to God* (1641), Dowsing believed that there was no safer place to be than '[in] his service'.⁶¹

ii. Military defeat or English security

One of the by-products of God's anger with England was the constant threat of war with 'ungodly' forces. Alexandra Walsham has argued that parliamentarians conceived the parliamentary cause 'in apocalyptic terms, as an epic battle between Christ and Antichrist, a final showdown with the Scarlet Whore of Babylon, a kind of Armageddon'.⁶² Still many believed that Parliament might be in for a devastating defeat rather than a vindicating victory. Just as Jeremiah prophesied that God would use Babylon to 'discipline' Judah, puritan preachers believed that God would allow parliamentary forces to suffer defeat in this great battle if they did not reform. Then their enemies would soon come 'not [as] single spies but in battalions'.⁶³ Many puritans believed that a complete Reformation would remove the rising military threat from royalist forces at home and 'Catholic' enemies abroad. Although they were not afraid to

⁶⁰ Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.22.

⁶¹ Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.22.

⁶² Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p. 115.

⁶³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV scene 5.

fight if necessary, even the usually bellicose John Ley warned that '[war] is so far from good indeed (when wicked men are prevalent in it) that it is the worst of evils'.⁶⁴

Warfare in the English Civil War remained brutal and was usually conducted at close range, with a 'transitional mixture of firearms and "muscle-powered" weapons that ranged from heavy artillery to clubs'.⁶⁵ As Barbara Donagan has described, the English landscape was home to scenes of horrific violence as 'hostilities were still conducted at close quarters and even artillery dealt death at close range. The process of killing and wounding was intimate; death was rarely distant'.⁶⁶ The spectre of military defeat conjured sickening images and was therefore a commanding incentive for action in Parliament.

The reality of Catholic forces abroad and Laudian sympathizers at home meant England needed God's favour to survive. Dowsing marked Calamy's reminder that England was 'a nation worthy to be loved', but it was still 'a nation as ripe for destruction as any other nation'.⁶⁷ Notwithstanding the military threat, Calamy admonished Parliament not to seek peace at any cost. In order for England to be secure, it needed to be internally unified, but that unity had to be for Reformation. Dowsing marked Calamy's historically based assertion that 'scarce ever any great enemy entered this Kingdome but when it was at Schism and division within itself'. This was the dilemma that faced the Long Parliament. As long as parliamentary forces battled royalists, the nation was vulnerable to attack from any number of enemies. On the other hand, Parliament could not extend the right hand of fellowship unless the king came to support their

⁶⁴ John Ley, *The Fury of Warre, and Folly of Sinne, as an Incentive to It, Declared and Applyed for Caution and Remedy against the Mischiefe and Misery of Both: In a Sermon Preached at St. Margarets Westminster before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Solemne and Publike Fast, Aprill 26, 1643 / by Iohn Ley* (London: Printed by G. M. for Christopher Meredith, 1643); pr. 26 April 1643; r. 9 August 1643; VI.8.6. Ley included an interesting word study on *Bellum*, suggesting that it was possible for it to indicate a 'goodness' in warfare. However, he stressed that thoughts of war were best directed toward the evils that men fall into because of it. War was never to be sought by a Christian nation.

⁶⁵ Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 74

⁶⁶ Donagan, *War in England*, p. 74.

⁶⁷ Calamy, *Englands Looking Glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11.13.

vision of a Reformed country. The only option was to win the war and remove the popish idols which had lured much of the country away from true religion.

Thomas Case voiced his concern that internal discord remained even among parliamentary forces. This grave fear deepened in the Commons as the plans of Parliament rested increasingly on their military might. As a soldier in the Eastern Association Army this bore special interest to Dowsing. In fact, Dowsing wrote ‘Army must be purged’ in the margin when Case preached ‘Will you give me leave to speak a word in plain English ... if you do not purge your armies, as well as recruit them, you may recruit them to your own and the Kingdom’s confusion ... [they] are reforming armies; let it be your care to make them reformed armies’.⁶⁸ The extent to which Case believed there were royalist sympathizers in the army is unclear, but two convictions are apparent. First, Case and Dowsing agreed that theirs were ‘reforming armies’. Second, an army meant to provide security for Parliament and to guarantee enforcement of parliamentary orders had to consist of reform-minded men. Once again, Dowsing the reader stepped into the shoes of the ideal soldier that Case had in mind.

The preachers feared that military defeat would undoubtedly mean religious compromise. As the civil war raged in March 1643, Dowsing scored in the margin next to Francis Cheynell’s declaration, ‘Beleeve it, if the Faction that is now up in Arms prevail, we shall have that service book which was prepared for Scotland, or worse, some Babylonion-Service ... and can any man that but hath an English-heart within him, bear such a Cheat?’⁶⁹ Previously, in December 1642, Dowsing marked the text as Charles Herle boldly asserted that this kind of threat warranted a

⁶⁸ Thomas Case, *The Root of Apostacy, and Fountain of True Fortitude. Delivered in a Sermon before Rhe [Sic] Honourable House of Commons, on Their Late Day of Thanks-Giving for the Great Victory Given to Sir William Waller and the Forces with Him, against the Army of Sir Ralph Hopton. By Thomas Case, Preacher at Milk-Street, London, and One of the Assembly of Divines* (London: Printed by J. R. for Luke Fawne, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Churchyard, at the signe of the Parrot, 1644); pr. 9 April 1644; r. 12 July 1644; II.15.9.

⁶⁹ Cheynell, *Sions memento, Gods Alarum* (pr. 31 May 1643; r. unknown), VI.9.19.

great sacrifice, 'If England must now be given for England, it is no ill bargain, 'tis but England once for England still'. The sacrifice would secure 'a lease for the inheritance ... the vessel and the passenger run one course of hazard, have but one port of safety'.⁷⁰ In other words, England would either rise as a Reformed country for future generations, or fall in the battle to make it so. Either way, the only lasting security for England was to obtain Reformation by defeating the forces that opposed it. Dowsing took up the messages of the sermons by serving. He served as a soldier in the name of Parliament, albeit in a largely administrative role. More importantly, he carried out his charge to cleanse churches in the name of Reformation. He was acting for England's security on both fronts.

The preachers emphasized the dire consequences of defeat so that Parliament would be more desperate for success. Once they set the fearful scene their messages changed tone to exult in a vision of victory. Four days prior to Guy Fawkes Day 1642, Dowsing followed along with his pen as Case elevated his hearers above a troubled earth and into the heavenly realm:

Oh if it might be reported in Heaven that England is reformed – that such a drunkard, such a swearer, such a covetous man, such a secure wretch is become a new man, what joy would it cause among the Angels of God? How would God himself delight in us and rejoice over us and think his mercie well bestowed.⁷¹

Edmund Calamy reported God's clear intention to save and purify England. At least that is how Calamy saw it. Dowsing drew a thin line next to Calamy's question: 'How often hath God appeared in the mount these last two years as if he had resolved to take up his dwelling there?' To deny God's purposes was disgusting to Calamy who asked, 'How many mountains of opposition have melted before you, as mountains of snow before the Sun? Be ashamed, be

⁷⁰ Charles Herle, *A Payre of Compasses for Church and State Delivered in a Sermon Preached at St. Margarets in Westminster before the Honorable House of Commons, at Their Monethly Fast November the Last, 1642 / by Charles Herle* (London: Printed by G. M. for Iohn Bartlet, 1642); pr. 30 November 1642; r. 27 December 1642; IV.29.38.

⁷¹ Case, *Two Sermons Lately Preached* (pr. uncertain; r. 1 November 1642), IV.7.33.

ashamed House of England, to distrust God after so many mercies'.⁷² Preachers like Case and Calamy insisted that Reformation met God's express purpose for England and that he had given ample evidence of his care. Going beyond the immediate benefit to England, Stephen Marshall imagined a broad scope of danger at the initial fast on 17 November 1640. He indicated that the welfare of Christendom depended on the Long Parliament. They must make this 'last stand' against popery since 'It may not be only our welfare and peace, and religion: but even the welfare of all Christendom, under God depends on your meeting'.⁷³

In 1641 Parliament saw God's delivering hand at work when hostilities between England and Scotland reached a tenuous end. Preachers used this development as evidence of God's mercy to England. Yet again, the House of Commons called on Marshall to lead the members in giving thanks for their most recent deliverance. Dowsing marked Marshall's reminder of the recently averted danger:

A dreadful cloud hath these two or three years been gathering, and hanging over our heads, readie to dissolve into showers of blood, two Nations [were] ready to imbrue their hands in each others blood, the most observing people in the Kingdome expecting nothing but certain ruin.⁷⁴

When military conflict with the king seemed certain in 1642, Simeon Ashe warned of another 'shower of blood' threatening England. Ashe lamented in the Epistle Dedicatory, 'The improvement of this Doctrine [seeking God as a refuge] is now become more necessary, because our dangers are increased and some suspect that England is threatened with a showre of blood'.⁷⁵

⁷² Calamy, *God's Free Mercy to England* (pr. 23 February 1642; r. 10 October 1642), IV.12.47.

⁷³ Stephen Marshall, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, Now Assembled in Parliament, at Their Publike Fast, November 17. 1640. Upon 2 Chron. 15. 2. The Lord Is with You, While Yee Bee with Him: And If Yee Seek Him, He Will Be Found of You: But If Yee Forsake Him, He Will Forsake You.* / by Stephen Marshall, Batchelour in Divinity, Minister of Finchingfield in Essex. Published by Order of the Said House (London: Printed by J. Okes, for Samuel Man, dwelling in St. Pauls Church-yard, at the signe of the Swan, 1641); pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641; IV.9.46.

⁷⁴ Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.17.

⁷⁵ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 1 April 1641; r. 8 September 1641), IV.4.Epistle Dedicatory.

In spite of the military threats that swarmed around Parliament, the shepherds of the Commons wanted to encourage their flock. Marshall asserted, ‘Your work is great, our evils are many. But be not discouraged, onely remember, God is with you, while you are with him’.⁷⁶ The comfort was conditional and effective.

The threat of military defeat also emerges in the preface to Dowsing’s iconoclasm journal. While the Scripture-laden preamble primarily speaks to the validity of iconoclastic campaigns, the verses also contain promises of military favour for God’s ‘reforming’ armies. Dowsing knew from his citation of Leviticus 26 that God promised ‘victory over your enemies’ if Parliament removed their idols. In the wider context of Leviticus 26 God promised that if his people were to walk ‘in my statutes and keep my commandments and perform them ... your enemies shall fall by the sword before you’. On the other hand, if they disobeyed, the Lord could ‘cast your carkeises upon the bodies of your idoles’. One way the Lord could accomplish this was by allowing military defeat. Deuteronomy 7.25 told Dowsing that if he did not make an effort to remove the idols the nation would become ‘accursed like [the idols]’. When Dowsing ‘brake down’ the ‘high places’ of Laudian idols, he believed that he was helping to establish a strong bulwark around the godly. The success of the ‘reforming’ army depended on the holiness of the nation.⁷⁷

iii. Renewed persecution or the triumph of the godly

The preachers’ passionate exhortations to Parliament made it plain that the godly had no intention of returning to an era in which the Archbishop of Canterbury held dominion over every English pulpit. The choice before the Long Parliament was clear. They could either regress to

⁷⁶ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.46.

⁷⁷ See Chapter Four (4.I) for a full discussion of the verses Dowsing placed at the beginning of the journal.

the tyranny of the previous decade or finally enable the godly cause to triumph. Dowsing read these words from Francis Cheynell just six months before marching into Cambridgeshire with orders to cleanse the churches there:

[Z]ion is now surrounded by [enemies] and your Honourable House is most eminently opposed by them: Many are them that plot against you, all the Antichristian Politicians in the Christian world are beating their brains how to destroy you, but their Plots are discovered, their Designes defeated by the watchfull providence of an Omnicient God.⁷⁸

The need to finalise the Reformation was becoming a 'life or death' issue. Iconoclasm became a way to redress the abominations of the past decade with a sense of finality. Dowsing was not sent to remove, but to destroy. His campaign was, in part, a decisive strike against Laudian persecution.

From the puritan perspective, the entire church and Commonwealth suffered oppression in the years preceding the civil war. Of all the preachers, Simeon Ashe went the furthest in identifying the scope of perceived tyranny:

And here I humbly refer it to your wisdoms to consider, whether our Prelates have not been (of late especially) the grand oppressors of the kingdom. Have they not been great oppressors both in Church and Common-wealth? They and their officers, by citations, censures, and exactions have been Catholicke oppressors. How many wealthy men have been crushed by their cruelty? How many poor families have been ruined by their Tyranny? And I beseech you to consider, whether the most pious, both among Preachers and people have not met with the hardest measures from their heavy hands. Alas, alas! How many faithful Ministers have they silenced?⁷⁹

The godly understood their persecution to be a more concentrated version of the cruelty doled out to the nation at large.

The most notorious act of Laudian persecution was the public mockery of the godly pamphleteer William Prynne in 1637.⁸⁰ Dowsing was certainly aware of the event. In fact, the

⁷⁸ Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum* (pr. 31 May 1643; r. unknown), VI.9.Epistle Dedicatory.

⁷⁹ Ashe, *The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed* (pr. 30 March 1642; r. 8 March 1643), IV.14.31.

⁸⁰ See Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 261. Peacey argues that Prynne used the notoriety of his ill-treatment to

iconoclast copied a poem from Prynne's perspective on the final page of Thomas Hill's *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (1642). Laud ordered the removal of Prynne's ears and the branding of his face with the initials S.L. for 'Seditious Libeller'. 'Laud's Stamps' were often referred to as *Stigmata Laudis*, a play on words which could also mean 'marks of honour'.⁸¹ Dowsing's writing is difficult to decipher, but at least this much can be read in the margin:

Bearing Laud's stamps in my cheeks I retire
 Triumphing God's sweet sacrifice by fire
 Triumphant I return my face defen[?]
 Laud's scorching sears Gods grateful sacrifice⁸²

With these kinds of atrocities in mind, Dowsing's iconoclasm takes on a slightly different tone. It was partly a rejoinder to Laud, who had created a system that not only defied the Reformed understanding of God's word but also disfigured God's servants. The ruination of church buildings was less than a proportional response. Eventually, Laud himself would pay the ultimate penalty for his habit of 'oppressing' puritans.

Laud's seeming friendliness with Catholicism made it easy to associate him with negative remarks made by papists. Dowsing read a sermon by John Ley just nineteen days before the Long Parliament passed the iconoclastic ordinance of August 1643. His pen followed Ley's words as the preacher cited Laud's predecessor in Canterbury, George Abbot (d.1633), who had witnessed Catholic intolerance toward 'Puritaines'. Abbot had once conversed with a future 'Cardinall' who had lambasted Puritanism. 'If you deal with a Protestant', the Catholic cleric began, 'tell him there is more hope of him, than of rash haire-brain'd Puritaines, because they

levy support for his attack on Laudians between 1643 and 1645. Peacey asserts that Prynne became the 'witch-hunter general for Commons'. The poem that Dowsing recorded about Prynne was in circulation during this period, presumably to immortalize Prynne's 'sacrifice'.

⁸¹ Mukhtar Ali Isani, "Hawthorne and the Branding of William Prynne," *The New England Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1972), p. 182.

⁸² Written by Dowsing in Thomas Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced. In a Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Solemne Fast, Iuly 27. 1642. By Thomas Hill, B.D. Pastor of the Church at Tychmersh in the Countie of Northampton. Published by Order of That House* (London: Printed by I. L. for Iohn Bellamie, Philemon Stephens, and Ralph Smith, 1642); pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643; IV.21.59.

(with religion) have put off all humanity, and civility with all of their other good manners'.⁸³

Years of Laudian and Catholic derision honed the response from godly ministers. They purposed to lump Laud and the Catholic Church together to make an easier target. Dowsing also scored the margin when Charles Herle unequivocally placed the blame for recent discord in the Church of England: 'I meane the Popish party among us, however their dispositions may be plausible, their positions are unpeaceably mischievous, however their Rivers may seem to run smoothe, their Sea is blood'.⁸⁴

Rhethoric like this only fuelled the puritan belief that the majority of the world was against them. The iconoclast placed a pen stroke next to Edward Corbet's painful acknowledgement that 'in this kingdome there was a time when virtue and piety were accounted crimes, and the name of Puritan a greater accusation than drunkenness or whoredom'.⁸⁵ Ley also pointed out that when Catholic sympathizers first conceived the 'Powder Plot', they 'purposed to have it laid on the Puritans'.⁸⁶ Despite all of these past attempts to undermine the Reformation in England, puritans held that God had consistently been on the side of Reformation. Herle equated English puritans with the 'three Hebrew children' who had survived the 'fiery furnace' because of the presence of the 'Son of Man'. Dowsing marked as Herle cited two of the most infamous Catholic plots, preaching, 'And hath he not been so with us? In the fire with us in the powder

⁸³ Quoted in Ley, *The Fury of Warre and the Folly of Sinne* (pr. 26 April 1643; r. 9 August 1643), VI.8.19-20. Ley is referring to a work entitled *The Reasons which Dr. Hill Hath Brought for the Upholding of Papistry, Unmasked and Showed to be Very Weak*. Hill was formerly a Church of England clergyman who had 'defected' to Catholicism. He wrote an explanation of his decision titled, *Quatron of Reasons*. In Ley's sermon, he cites, 'Archbishop Abbot, his answer to Doct. Hill's 3rd reason, p.103'. For more on Abbot's role in defending Protestant Orthodoxy see Kenneth Fincham, "Prelacy and Politics: Archbishop Abbot's Defence of Protestant Orthodoxy," *Historical Research* 61, no. 144 (1988).

⁸⁴ Herle, *A Prayer of Compasses for Church and State* (pr. 30 November 1642; r. 27 December 1642), IV.29.25.

⁸⁵ Corbet, *Gods Providence* (pr. 28 December 1642; r. unknown), IV.30.21.

⁸⁶ Ley, *The Fury of Warre and the Folly of Sinne* (pr. 26 April 1643; r. 9 August 1643), VI.8.22.

plot and in the water with us too in 88. So eminently was God with us in the water then that ... in that battle the Sea and God himself were turn'd both Lutherans'.⁸⁷

Parliamentary preachers regularly used 'Luther' when they wanted to conjure an image of triumph for the godly. Although their views on worship were more akin to Calvin's, Dowsing often marked passages in which preachers cast Luther as 'that glorious light of the Gospell, [who] was called the trumpet of rebellion'.⁸⁸ Dowsing routinely noted references to Luther on the title pages of sermons. On the front page of Stephen Marshall's *Meroz Cursed*, Dowsing cited the pages where he could find references to 'Beza, Luther, [and] Foxe'.⁸⁹ Marshall, and other preachers, had a purpose in citing each man. As Calvin's theological heir, Beza represented the best of Reformed theology. Foxe celebrated martyred exemplars and showed Christians the 'inevitability of adversity' for the faithful.⁹⁰ But when they invoked Luther's memory, it was not as a kneeling martyr. He was the hero who defied the pope with his calls for reform – and lived.⁹¹

Showing Luther to be one of his many interests, Dowsing recorded three elements on Obadiah Sedgwick's sermon from 25 May 1642: 'Luther p.4,50,47; a sad story of a woman p.21; Idolatry 24.25'.⁹² In a sermon by Thomas Hill, Dowsing framed the paragraph when the future Westminster divine placed parliamentary reforms in the line of 'Waldus in France,

⁸⁷ Herle, *A Prayer of Compasses for Church and State* (pr. 30 November 1642; r. 27 December 1642), IV.29.35.

⁸⁸ Corbet, *Gods Providence* (pr. 28 December 1642; r. unknown), IV.30.21.

⁸⁹ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (pr. 23 February 1642; r. 10 October 1642), IV.13.title page.

⁹⁰ Damian Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of Acts and Monuments," *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Hants: Scholar Press, 1997), p. 182.

⁹¹ Although Luther was a favourite illustrative figure, the presence of Calvin's theology is undeniable in the sermons. The way in which the preachers wielded the 'Law of God' testified to the reception of Calvin's concept of the law. For example, preachers appealed to 'the magistrate' to use 'civil laws' in order to serve the religious needs of 'the people'. Calvin used these categories in Book IV of *The Institutes* to discuss the proper function of civil law in relation to the moral law of God. See I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's Concept of the Law*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series; 30 (Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick Publications, 1992), pp. 242-243.

⁹² Sedgwick, *Englands Preservation* (pr. 25 May 1642; r. 25 March 1643), IV.18.title page.

Wicliffe in England, Luther in Germany, Knox in Scotland'.⁹³ Luther epitomised the triumph of the Reformation to such a degree that references to him read like caricatures. It seems that when preachers wanted to add weight to a statement or illustration they attributed it to Luther.

Dowsing marked the effusive praise when they spoke of Luther's dogged determination in reform: 'Such a spirit was in Luther who when he was offered to be Cardinall if he would be quiet, replyd no, not if I might be pope'.⁹⁴ Stephen Marshall admired the resolute Luther, 'who protested to God that no portion, which God could give him in this world should content him but onely this, to be God's servant, and to be a usefull man in his church'.⁹⁵ When the godly wanted assurance that surviving oppression was possible, they looked to Luther.

The current state of the churches in England was also compelling evidence of oppression. Puritan preachers took this as a personal affront. Andrew Perne knew that it was going to take 'Gospell courage' to overcome the years of abuse at Laud's hand. Dowsing scored the margin next to Perne's description of how

superstitious, nay idolatrous, Crosses and Crucifixes have been upheld and decked ... in the staring-Cheape, in our Church-yards, and High-wayes, and these have been worshipped, and by these and some other things, the pope hath kept possession of our Kingdome ... Downe with these high places.⁹⁶

Perne's account of the state of worship in England leads to the final theme in Dowsing's collection. The themes above act as prelude to an all-consuming concern in Puritanism. A pure God demanded pure worship.

⁹³ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.19.

⁹⁴ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.57.

⁹⁵ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (pr. 23 February 1642; r. 10 October 1642), IV.13.25.

⁹⁶ Perne, *Gospell Courage, or Christian Resolution for God, and His Truth* (pr. 31 May 1643; r. 10 September 1643), VI.10.21.

iv. Tainted worship or pure worship

Dowsing jotted the simple phrase, ‘divine worship costs much’, on the front page of Thomas Hill’s *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (1642). Those four words captured the essence of a fourth theme in Dowsing’s collection. In the rest of the sermons, the straightforward pursuit of God’s designs for worship heightened the need to resolve complicated issues like pending warfare, Laudian persecution and divine judgement. Parliamentary preachers expressed a clear desire to worship God in a way that pleased him but, as Dowsing noted, the investment required to reach that goal would be steep. Yet, their willingness to disrupt a nation highlights the fact that the godly anticipated that their investment would yield a glorious return. Arguments followed two parallel paths. Some chose to emphasize the folly of ‘tainted’, ‘Anti-Christian’ worship, which was no worship at all in the puritan mind. Others drew the listeners toward the glory of divinely instituted worship. Both ideas were present in nearly every sermon Dowsing read.

Although the godly wanted to establish worship ‘according to the Word’, it was not always entirely clear how far to take the ‘regulative principle’ in worship. In fact, debate continues today over exactly what the Westminster divines meant when they wrote ‘the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men ... or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture’.⁹⁷ However, it is generally agreed that the regulative principle relates to ‘elements’ of worship (i.e. prayer, preaching, sacraments, etc ...) and not ‘circumstances’ (i.e. pews and pulpits, etc ...).⁹⁸ The problem with Laudianism was

⁹⁷ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 21.1.

⁹⁸ For a fairly typical Reformed understanding of the regulative principle see John Allen Delivuk, “Biblical Authority and the Proof of the Regulative Principle of Worship in the Westminster Confession,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 58, no. 2 (1996), pp. 237-256. For a discussion of tensions created by the principle see the

that it directly affected the elements of worship in a way that, for the godly, altered the divine intention.⁹⁹ Thus, according to the godly platform, Laud and the king tainted the pure worship of God.

When the House of Commons made its first major stand against the king, it was largely based on the preponderance of ‘tainted worship’ in English churches. On 1 December 1641 the Long Parliament assailed the king with the Grand Remonstrance, a document containing a litany of offences committed by the king since his reign began. Although the accompanying petition began ‘Your Majesty’s most humble and faithful subjects the Commons’, the primary document was a scathing diatribe against the king’s state and ecclesiastical policies.¹⁰⁰ On the church front a main target was ‘The Bishops, and the corrupt part of the Clergy’ who had ‘[cherished] formality and superstition’ and exercised ‘ecclesiastical tyranny and usurpation’.¹⁰¹ The anger over this display of ‘ecclesiastical tyranny’, and the widespread idolatry created by it, remained throughout the Long Parliament. Two years after the Grand Remonstrance, John Ley preached and Dowsing marked his words:

For Idolatry, I will not tell you of myself how much it hath increased in a few years before the summons of this Honourable Senate now assembled, you may receive information ... in the First Remonstrance of the Parliament ... [that] in those years the

written debate between John Frame and T. David Gordon in John M. Frame, “Some Questions About the Regulative Principle,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 54, no. 2 (1992), pp 357-366 and T. David Gordon, “Some Answers About the Regulative Principle,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 55, no. 2 (1993), pp. 321-329. Frame attempted to raise questions that might show how the regulative principle was not a fail-safe measure in defining Reformed worship. Gordon countered that the benefit of the regulative principle came not necessarily in its ability to define worship, but to protect worship from misguided church authority. Since the principle largely took shape in the post-Laudian context, Gordon’s argument appears more appropriate. Frame also failed to delineate what he meant by terms such as ‘elements’ and ‘circumstances’. However, both agreed that the regulative principle spoke more to ‘elements’ than to ‘circumstances’ in worship. The consensus regarding circumstances is based on *Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.6, ‘there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church ... which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence’.

⁹⁹ See Chapter Three (3.II) for a full discussion of Laud’s policies.

¹⁰⁰ “The Grand Remonstrance,” *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660*, ed. Gardiner. An online version of the documents contained in Gardiner’s edition can be found at http://www.constitution.org/eng/conpur_.htm (accessed 8 May 2008).

¹⁰¹ “The Grand Remonstrance,” *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, ed. Gardiner.

Popish party enjoyed such exemptions from the Penal Laws, as amounted to Toleration.¹⁰²

The preachers' rhetoric conflated Laudianism and Catholicism to the point that the two became virtually synonymous. The iconoclast placed a line next to Stephen Marshall's observation: 'little difference is to be found betwixt their [Laudians'] practise, and the Superstitions and Idolatries of Rome'.¹⁰³ When either party was mentioned, they were bywords for the foolishness of idolatry. Puritans were angry because England had fallen into this foolishness with the full consent of the king.

In addition to the Grand Remonstrance, other ordinances of Parliament prove that removing idolatry was a high priority for the Commons. The ordinance of 28 August 1643, which the Earl of Manchester used to authorise Dowsing's campaign, was one of three such measures. On 28 September 1641 the Commons ordered that 'scandalous pictures of any one or more persons of the Trinity, and all images of the Virgin Mary shall be taken away and abolished'. The iconoclastic ordinance of 9 May 1644 passed just one month before Parliament's crucial victory over Prince Rupert at the Battle of Marston Moor. Emboldened by a recent victory at Newbury, the ordinance commanded 'the further demolishing of Monuments of Idolatry, and superstition'.¹⁰⁴ Taken together, these documents show that establishing 'true worship' was near the heart of the parliamentary cause. On the same day that Dowsing gave orders for the 'takeing down [of] 20 cherubims, and 38 pictures' in Aldeburgh, the iconoclast marked Thomas Goodwin's celebration of reform measures: 'You have issued out an Order for the purging out of divers innovations in and about the worship of God ... Go on and establish it,

¹⁰² Ley, *The Fury of Warre and the Folly of Sinne* (pr. 26 April 1643; r. 9 August 1643), VI.8.40.

¹⁰³ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.34.

¹⁰⁴ Wanklyn and Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War*. See also Trevor Cooper, "Appendix 5: The Parliamentary Ordinances," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, p. 342.

you will establishe the Kingdome by it'.¹⁰⁵ Before they could usher in their idealised ecclesiastical policies, puritan preachers had first to show the foolishness of tainted worship.

Sermon texts erupted with shocking force when the preacher denounced idolatrous worship and Dowsing highlighted some of the more vociferous passages. He emphasised Edward Reynolds' argument that the presence of one idolatrous element rendered 'all those other good things a tributary unto Satan'.¹⁰⁶ Speaking specifically about supposedly 'beautiful' statues and images, Reynolds quipped, '[it might be] that which is faire in thine eyes, is filthy in Gods'.¹⁰⁷ Sidrach Simpson claimed that God was ready to pronounce 'Ichabod' over England because she treasured her idols so.¹⁰⁸ Dowsing marked Simpson's cries of 'Never, never! was the glory so neare departing as it is now, it is on the threshold, taking the wing'.¹⁰⁹ As if the image of God's final departure were not strong enough, Simpson continued, 'and if this doe not melt you, let good nature move you, for when the glory is gone, your defence is gone ... [which would mean] your name bee rotten and corrupted, your wives ravished, your children murdered, your houses plundered'.¹¹⁰ Simpson's sermon confirms that it was no mere statement of preference when Francis Cheynell preached, 'Be sure that there be no Babylonian gods or Romish Idols tolerated in England; let it no longer be counted the piety of the times to make our

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Goodwin, *Zerubbabels Encouragement to Finish the Temple a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons at Their Late Solemne Fast, Apr. 27, 1642 / by Tho. Goodwin* (London: Printed for R.D. and are to be sold by Francis Eglesfield, 1642); pr. 27 April 1642; r. 24 January 1644; IV.15.41.

¹⁰⁶ Edward Reynolds, *Israels Petition in Time of Trouble. A Sermon Preached in St. Margarets Church at Westminster, before the Honourable House of Commons Now Assembled in Parliament. At the Late Publique and Solemn Fast, July, 27. 1642. By Edward Reynoldes, Rector of the Church of Braunston in Northamptonshire. Published by Order of the Said House* (London: Printed by George Bishop, and Robert White, for Robert Bostock, dwelling in Pauls Church-yard, at the signe of the Kings-Head, 1642); pr. 27 July 1642; r. unknown; IV.22.11.

¹⁰⁷ Reynolds, *Israels Petition in Time of Trouble* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. unknown), IV.22.33.

¹⁰⁸ Ichabod, or 'no glory' was the name that the wife of Phinehas gave to her newborn son when she heard that the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant in the battle of Mizpeh (1 Samuel 4.19-22). She chose the name because 'the glory has departed Israel'. Simpson used 'Ichabod' to say that God would soon remove his glory from England.

¹⁰⁹ Sidrach Simpson, *Reformations Preservation Opened in a Sermon Preached at Westminster before the Honourable House of Commons, at the Late Solemn Fast, July 26, 1643 / by Sidr. Simpson* (London: Printed for Benjamin Allen, 1643); pr. 26 July 1643; r. 17 September 1643; VI.16.16.

¹¹⁰ Simpson, *Reformations Preservation* (pr. 26 July 1643; r. 17 September 1643), VI.16.18.

Churches Houses of temptation'.¹¹¹ Cheynell was simply stating the puritan belief that folly had held sway for far too long.

As Dowsing made his way through Cambridgeshire and Suffolk he was not obsessed with images *per se*. As a part of the puritan movement, he sought to undermine the 'foolishness' that produced the images. The sermons, Dowsing's journal and the parliamentary documents show that puritans remained baffled by any allegiance to this form of worship. They argued that it invited the sure judgment of God by ignoring his wise design for worship as expressed in the Bible. To be sure, Dowsing's campaign was one among many attempts to '[create] a church that not only sounded Protestant but that also looked Protestant'.¹¹² Yet the governing rule was for Protestant, godly, worship to be biblical worship.

The second commandment provided the most powerful ammunition against Laudian innovations, since the godly believed it clearly addressed many of their excesses. Margaret Aston summarised the Reformed view of the second commandment: 'This commandment, therefore, properly understood, pointed believers toward the right teachers, as well as deflecting them from false ones. Christians should shun images and seek out books'.¹¹³ Therefore, it is surprising that none of the sermons Dowsing read before or during his campaign had the second commandment as their focal text. Instead, the preachers riddled their sermons with references to 'graven images' and the need to eradicate them. Stephen Marshall chose II Chronicles 15.2 as his sermon text for 17 November 1640, but the second commandment featured prominently in his 'uses'. Dowsing bracketed the section in which Marshall, after maintaining that a certain 'generation of men' had 'adventured ... to corrupt God's worship', asked for 'leeve to give you a

¹¹¹ Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum* (pr. 31 May 1643; r. unknown), VI.9.32.

¹¹² Morrill, "The Puritan Revolution," *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. Coffey and Lim, p. 70.

¹¹³ Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 443.

briefe view of the hegde that God hath made around the second commandment'.¹¹⁴ The Lord had placed this protective 'hedge' around the second commandment so that only a foolish person would 'meddle and jot further than the Lord himself hath commanded: it standing like the Cherubims, and the flaming Sword, which turned every way to keepe the way of the Tree of Life'.¹¹⁵

Dowsing's annotations tracked Marshall's outline of three dangers worshippers faced when crossing the hedge which God had placed around the commandment. First, he urged the Commons to affirm that 'God is a jealous God'. For Marshall, God was the husband, 'easily provoked to jealousie which is the rage of man, and will accept no ransom'.¹¹⁶ In the context of Reformed Orthodoxy God's jealousy was not a mere emotion. Rather, it was to be understood in terms of action. The puritan belief in God's discipline meant that when idolatry (adultery) incited him to jealousy his retribution usually followed. Accepting 'no ransome' was a rhetorical flourish used to denote God's unquenchable hatred for idolatry, just as a good husband would never grow accustomed to an adulterous wife. Thus, the first reason to obey the commandment was the reality of God's sole claim on the affections of his people.

The second reason was more pointed. Dowsing scored a line next to a paragraph which contained the shocking phrase, 'All such [breakers of the second commandment] are said to hate God'.¹¹⁷ Marshall's hyperbolic language is one example of the puritan movement drafting Scripture into parliamentary service. He attacked the Laudian faction's attempts to secure 'the beauty of holiness', casting them as acts of hatred toward God. Many puritans would grant that Laudians and papists spoke eloquently of their love for God. Yet according to Marshall, they

¹¹⁴ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.34.

¹¹⁵ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.40.

¹¹⁶ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.40.

¹¹⁷ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.41.

were those who ‘pretend that they are lovers of him’. He mentioned Jeroboam’s duplicitous actions (I Kings.12.28-33) as he ‘pretended nothing but respect to God, and to God’s people, when he set up his Calves: so these men pretend reverence and veneration to God’s ordinances: but God protests that they all hate him’.¹¹⁸ Marshall’s third reason drew on the possible effects idolatry would have on future generations. The punishment ‘intailed upon’ those who broke the commandment extended to the ‘third and fourth generations’. In essence, God would continue to hold the members’ great-grandchildren responsible for their apathy toward idolatry. Marshall’s three ‘reasons’ attempted to show just how foolish the propagation of idolatry was.

Accusations of ‘foolishness’ flew from both sides of the debate. The parliamentary preachers recognised that Laudians and papists held puritan ideals in derision. Often the sermons contain an almost comical representation of Laudian views toward puritan worship and preaching. In one conspicuous example Thomas Case became a satirist to make his point. Dowsing placed a bracket next to Case’s words spoken from the Laudian perspective:

Away with these Isaiahs, Jeremiahs, Habbakuks, these be troublers of Church and Common-wealth, men that are always bauling against Idolatry, and through the loyns of Idolatry, strike at any harmless and profitable ceremonies, whereby the people may be edified: men that are always preaching hell and the Law, and strictnesse and preciseness, that we do not know how to behave ourselves among them. If we must have preaching, let us have it of another strain. Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, oyled sermons ... that may not disquiet and perplex tender consciences.¹¹⁹

Puritans wore their obsession with idolatry as a badge of honour. Such an ‘obsession’ comported with God’s concern for his own glory in Scripture. Pouring contempt on God-fForbidden worship practices was a hallmark of puritan preaching.

¹¹⁸ Marshall, *A Sermon Preached* (pr. 17 November 1640; r. 28 March 1641), IV.9.41.

¹¹⁹ Case, *Two Sermons Lately Preached*, IV.6.10. The preaching and the reading dates are uncertain. However, Dowsing purchased the sermon on 29 October 1642, making it probable that he read it before the iconoclasm began.

Francis Cheynell argued that seemingly small errors, like the use of images in worship, were grounds for breaking fellowship with other believers. Dowsing marked Cheynell's explanation: 'I do not go about to seduce you to Brownism ... for I willingly embrace communion with all Reformed churches, or Congregations'. Yet he made clear that 'we must not communicate with any Church or Congregation in their present error, though that congregation be willing to be reformed, and has in it all things necessary for salvation'.¹²⁰ Cheynell's argument became confused a few moments later when he asserted, 'you must separate before you can reform'.¹²¹ The resolution comes in the broader context of the sermon which hints that it was not Brownism to request an erring church to separate. His claim is dramatic in its implications. Cheynell seems to have believed that possessing 'all things necessary for salvation' was not enough to warrant fellowship with other 'believers'. His argument suggests that the presence of 'images' and popish 'ceremonies' presented such a danger that otherwise healthy churches should be ostracised because of them. Cheynell preached that images and ceremonies indicated a perilous misapplication of the Gospel, even in congregations where the basic elements of the Gospel were identifiable. In short, these congregations did not fully understand what they were preaching.

Dowsing used his own set of Scripture texts to justify his iconoclastic campaign.¹²² But his choices offer only a glimpse at the host of Scripture verses in the puritan arsenal when they attacked the foolishness of 'tainted' worship. Dowsing's marked passages in Thomas Hill's *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (1642) mingled biblical exposition and illustration together with a decidedly 'puritan' logic to show that God would not tolerate innovation. To innovate was to directly defy the Word of God. 'Uzzah upon faire pretence, put forth his hand to uphold the

¹²⁰ Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum* (pr. 31 May 1643; r. unknown), VI.9.27.

¹²¹ Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum*, (pr. 31 May 1643; r. unknown), VI.9.28.

¹²² See Chapter Four (4.I) for a discussion of the Scripture texts in the preface to Dowsing's journal.

Arke', Hill argued from I Chronicles 13, 'yet God would not accept of his faire intention, but smote him that he dyed ... the reason rendered ... that God was not sought after the due order, his Truth was not observed'.¹²³ In a more artful expression Hill claimed, 'Hypocrisy is lip-labour and lip-labour is lost labour; no dutie is acceptable without truth of heart in it. Superstitious worship, taught by men's precepts, may be devout enough, but because it want the Authoritie of God's truth to Steere it, how marvellously doth God curse it'.¹²⁴ He continued attacking the 'wantonness' of 'Will-worship' and 'Wit-worship' which 'thinking to please God with better devises than his owne, it turns to gross folly and ends in much mischief, rather than acceptation'.¹²⁵ Believing they were full of 'Will-worship', Hill also challenged the king to defend his ecclesiastical policies from Scripture:

If our Prelaticall power and Cathedrall pomp be of Divine Right, let us see a Divine word for it, what need we such violent arguments to maintain them, oath upon oath, subscription upon subscription? Let Christ himself be acknowledged as King in His Church, as Lord in his house, let the word of Truth be our Book of Canons, our Books of Discipline, and if Paul were our visitor, he would rejoyce to behold our order, as Colossians 2 verse 5.¹²⁶

Like Dowsing's letter to Newcomen, Hill appealed to events in King Edward VI's reign when 'some people contending for one image, others for another, gave occasion that the king took downe all. Who knoweth rather the Lord hath called you to this Parliament to accomplish this, amongst other services'.¹²⁷ In part, Hill wanted to incite Parliament to recreate what Diarmaid MacCulloch called the 'visitation holocaust' against images which took place

¹²³ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.14.

¹²⁴ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.15.

¹²⁵ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.16.

¹²⁶ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.17.

¹²⁷ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.59. Dowsing had an appreciation for this kind of historical reference, but not all were as reliable as this one. In Thomas Goodwin's *Zerubbabels Encouragement to Finish the Temple*, Dowsing pays special attention to a story of a fallen image of Peter in Rome. He marks it on the title page and in the margin of the page on which it is found. Goodwin preaches: 'in 1619 or 20 (or thereabouts) ... it was reported that a great brasse image of the Apostle Peter ... standing in St. Peter's church in Rome. There was a great and massive stone fell downe upon it, and so shattered it to pieces, that

during Edward's reign.¹²⁸ However, Hill revealed his own underlying concern when he applied Matthew 15.9 to England's situation saying that papists 'were teaching for Doctrine the commandments of men'.

Many puritans offered the healing presence of true worship to cure the wounds caused by foolish, tainted worship. The people of God had been taken captive by 'Soule-betraying-non-residents, Soule-poysoning-innovators, or Soule-pining-dry-nurses'.¹²⁹ Puritans wanted to rescue them by '[casting] Antichrist out of his saddle, wherein he has sat too fast among us, that Christ may better get up into his stirrup to ride about conquering his enemies'.¹³⁰ It was time to 'break the brazen serpent and to call it Nehushatan, a piece of brass'.¹³¹ Once done, puritans could state their plans positively, turning their attention to establishing God's holy design for worship.

Dowsing used his pen to stress Obadiah Sedgwick's desire for Reformation in positive terms. 'Sirs!' Sedgwick cried, 'No private or publicke work of Reformation will come to good, which is derived only from a feare of evill, and not from a love of good'.¹³² Joseph Caryl concurred, proclaiming, 'And yet it is most certain that no good we doe ... will doe us good

not a letter of all that sentence (whereon Rome founds her claim) was left whole, as to be read, saving this one piece of the sentence, Aedificabo Ecclesiam meam'(IV.15.28).

¹²⁸ MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*, p. 73.

¹²⁹ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.52.

¹³⁰ Thomas Temple, *Christs Government in and over His People. Delivered in a Sermon before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Publick and Solemne Fast, Octob. 26. 1642. / by Thomas Temple D.D. And Minister of the Church of Battersea in Surrey. Published by Order of That House* (London: Printed for Samuel Gellibrand at the Brazen Serpent in Pauls Church-yard, 1642); pr. 26 October 1642; r. 26 March 1643; IV.26.35.

¹³¹ Vines, *Calebs Integrity in Following the Lord Fully* (pr. 30 November 1642; r. 18 December 1642), IV.28.31.

¹³² Sedgwick, *Englands Preservation* (pr. 25 May 1642; r. 25 March 1643), IV.18.38. Although Sedgwick wanted to maintain a positive perspective, he was careful to cite the 'evils' that needed to be reformed. On the title page of the sermon Dowsing made a note of where Sedgwick's list could be found. The preacher listed: '1.erronious doctrines; 2.superstitious practices; 3. against idolatry and seducing priests and Jesuits; 4. notorious delinquents and offenders; 5. scandalous ministers and innovations; 6.the need to set a faithful and laborious ministry;7.need to encourage faithful ministry; 8.need to ease tender consciences; 9. vindicate the Lord's Day; 10.the need for a Reformation according to the Word of God; 11. for the relieving of poor distressed Ireland.' The iconoclast also noted similar 'rules to Reformation' on the title page of Sidrach Simpson's *Reformations Preservation*, VI.16.

beyond (if it doe so much) unless we make God our end'.¹³³ These statements support a recurring theme in this study of Dowsing. Puritans like Dowsing did not oppose images out of 'mere hatred' for idolatry, but primarily out love for the purity of worship. Without the ideal of pure worship, hatred for idolatry would not exist. Their negative assertions relative to idolatry only set the stage for their positive program of worship reform. As Stephen Marshall stated positively, 'all Christian worship, publique and solitary, whatever the corps of it might be, the soul of it is nothing but honour, and glory, and praise to our God through Jesus Christ'.¹³⁴ Yet Marshall recognised that what puritans believed to be positive, others feared disastrous. He offered a simple explanation for his opponents' tendency to 'turn Jubilee into Lamentation'. In sum: 'they fear to lose their toyes and fooleries, which Provoke God against us'.¹³⁵

Marshall's comments highlight the certainty with which many puritans pursued their program of reform. They believed Laudians and papists were so utterly bewitched by images and ceremonies that they could not be trusted to make wise judgements. It was their curiosity that had driven them away from the truth. In December 1642, Dowsing read and marked Charles Herle's explicit point: 'Truth is a virgin, and would be lov'd not violated, not vex'd, not ravish'd. Curiosity strives to commit a kind of mentall rape on Truth'.¹³⁶ Since their enemies 'assaulted' truth so aggressively, the most loving action puritan preachers could suggest was to wound them in their error. 'If you would be a friend to evill men, wound them', Caryl counselled, 'a kiss is enmity. Favour and compliance fattens their sinnes, and hardens their hearts, whereas reproof and punishment may possibly reform and heale them'. He likened Parliament to the 'Children of Israel' who 'arose to go to war' when they learned that the Tribe of Manasseh had erected an

¹³³ Caryl, *The Workes of Ephesus Explained* (pr. 27 April 1642; r. 27 March 1643), IV.16.59.

¹³⁴ Stephen Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.25.

¹³⁵ Stephen Marshall, *A Peace Offering to God* (pr. 7 September 1641; r. 24 March 1643), II.3.41.

¹³⁶ Herle, *A Prayer of Compasses for Church and State* (30 November 1642; r. 27 December 1642), IV.29.33.

altar on the banks of the Jordan. As Caryl reasoned, ‘They will not beare them in this, though their Brethren’.¹³⁷ Ultimately, Caryl and his colleagues did not see worship as an issue over which clear-thinking Christians could disagree. The Word was far too clear in prohibiting ‘scandalous pictures’ and ‘superstitions’ to warrant any misunderstanding. Puritan certainty was a counterpart to a perceived madness in their enemies and ‘erring brethren’.

Certainty meant puritans rarely qualified statements about what kind of worship should be writ large over the nation. The best service to English Christians would be for Parliament to ‘Give us the ordinances of Christ in their naked and own colours, so that they shall be blest to us, we under them and [Parliament] by them’.¹³⁸ It was in pursuit of the ‘blest’ state of worship that prompted William Bridge’s demand to ‘let there be no dust left in the house of God in any corner’.¹³⁹

The godly community believed that the time was at hand to purify what Laud’s policies had tainted. With all impurities washed away, a grateful England could finally behold the beauty of God’s design. Dowsing emphasised Bridge’s recommendation of the benefits of pure worship:

Great is the pomp of God’s ordinances when freed from our pomp, great is their glory when freed from ours. Every ordinance is best administered, when it is most effectuell, and a thing is most full of efficacie when it is plenum fui, immixtum alieni. As wine, or water which does most cool or cleanse when freed from mixtures.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Caryl, *The Works of Ephesus Explained* (pr. 27 April 1642; r. 27 March 1643), IV.16.51.

¹³⁸ Bridge, *Babylons Downfall* (pr. 1 April 1641; r. 8 September 1641), IV.4.16

¹³⁹ Bridge, *Babylons Downfall* (pr. 1 April 1641; r. 8 September 1641), IV.4.16. Edmund Calamy made a similar point, speaking of ‘Prelates who met at Rome’ who were satisfied to simply ‘sweep a houseful of dust with their tales, and instead of sweeping out the dust, they swept it about the house’. See *Englands looking glasse* (pr. 22 December 1641; r. 5 April 1643), IV.11. 47-48. In other words, he said that the only acceptable Reformation was a comprehensive ‘sweeping’ of the churches in England. Dowsing would be one straw on Parliament’s broom.

¹⁴⁰ Bridge, *Babylons Downfall* (pr. 1 April 1641; r. 8 September 1641), IV.4.13. The Latin idiom means that a ‘thing’ is most complete when ‘untainted’. Bridge (and Dowsing) liked these vivid illustrations. In the same point, Bridge preached: ‘In the primitive time when the heathen would put the Christians to a cruell death they tied a living man to a dead man, so that by the filthy savour, and stench of the dead carkasse, they might poison the living man to death. This they counted the worst of death, the death of deaths. So when the dead ordinances of man’s Inventions shall be tyed to the living ordinances of God’s appointment. What is this, but as much as in us lyes to

The key to the puritan positive outlook lay in Christ's promise to build his church, 'Aedificabo Ecclesiam meam'. If they surrendered themselves to God, they believed that he would use them to accomplish this promise. Thomas Goodwin sustained a long argument on the basis of these 'three words which God hath spoken once, yea twice Aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, which have more force in them than all the created power in Heaven, Earth, or Hell'.¹⁴¹ He argued that this one promise from Christ in Matthew 16.18 was enough to ensure a Reformation despite obvious obstacles. Dowsing followed along with his pen as Goodwin pointed to the Apostle Paul who 'came to set up Evangelical and Spiritual worship (which is called a Reformation Heb.9.10)' and 'met with opposition everywhere, and that from such who were worshippers also'.¹⁴² Goodwin exhorted Parliament 'not to be discouraged in, or think the worse of any business that is for God, because of difficulties and interruptions'. Instead, they should trust that God would bring a 'summer of the Gospell and an harvest of a better Reformation'.¹⁴³

In attempting to establish pure, spiritual worship, puritans participated in 'one of God's great designs'. According to a passage Dowsing marked in Thomas Hill's *Trade of Truth Advanced* (1642), it was worth shedding 'no little blood ... to vindicate the Doctrine of Divine worship'.¹⁴⁴ Opposition did not matter because

Kingdomes are for Churches, and Churches golden candlesticks to hold forth Truth, that therein Christ may appear in his most glorious lustre; when the banners of Truth are universally and victoriously displayed, The Kingdomes of this world shall become the

poison the living with the dead? But I pray tell me what unkindness hath the good ordinance of Christ done to us that we should put it to so sad a death'.

¹⁴¹ Goodwin, *Zerubbabels Encouragement to Finish the Temple* (pr. 27 April 1642; r. 24 January 1644), IV.15.27.

¹⁴² Goodwin, *Zerubbabels Encouragement to Finish the Temple* (pr. 27 April 1642; r. 24 January 1644), IV.15.23.

¹⁴³ Goodwin, *Zerubbabels Encouragement to Finish the Temple* (pr. 27 April 1642; r. 24 January 1644), IV.15.57.

¹⁴⁴ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.12.

Kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever Revel.
11.15.¹⁴⁵

The parliamentary preachers believed that God's design for worshipping the risen Christ would one day be 'universally and victoriously displayed' regardless of what transpired in their generation.

With a sure-fire promise from God Almighty, Robert Harris wondered 'Why we sit still when wind and tyde and all is for us? When we have Law on our sides and Gospell on our sides? For prayer ingrosses all the World, Heaven, Earth, All'.¹⁴⁶ In 1641 Edmund Calamy had hoped that prayer would take the place of a war. Calamy pleaded with Parliament to carry out reform, but he cautioned them about the nature of a Reformation that came from the barrel of a gun. Dowsing marked as Calamy urged the powerful men of Parliament to

Doe it in a praying way; not by the weapons of war, but by the weapons of the Church, Prayers, and Teares; In stead of fighting we have Fasting, and in stead of the enemies drummes we have Aaron's bells sounding in our ears: our people have prayed up a reformation.¹⁴⁷

Calamy's bloodless Reformation was not to be. Dowsing's iconoclasm might be shocking from the modern perspective, but it was arguably the least violent campaign of the civil war.

III. Conclusion

As an enthusiastic member in the puritan movement, William Dowsing faced a series of ultimatums at the beginning of the 1640s. When he read and annotated the parliamentary fast sermons they exposed him to two competing realities. On one hand his parliamentary compatriots faced a destiny of divine retribution, military defeat, constant persecution, and a

¹⁴⁵ Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (pr. 27 July 1642; r. 10 September 1643), IV.21.18.

¹⁴⁶ Harris, *A Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons* (pr. 25 May 1642; r. 25 March 1643) IV.17.7.

¹⁴⁷ Calamy, *Gods Free Mercy to England* (pr. 23 February 1642; r. 10 October 1642), IV.12.7.

system of 'Babylonian' worship. On the other hand, a zealous Reformation could mean the dawning of glorious times marked by divine blessings, a secure homeland, a triumphant brotherhood, and soul-stirring worship. Iconoclasm played a tactical role in the effort to secure the latter reality for the godly. As the iconoclast read and annotated the sermons in the early years of the 1640s, recurring and potentially alarming themes emerged. The frequency of the doctrines, arguments, theologians, and cross-references on the front pages of the sermons suggest that the annotations were etched on his mind as well. The recurring themes created a dilemma. Dowsing executed idols because they represented the possibility that God might execute his judgment. He attempted to clear a space for pure, spiritual worship because it invited the loving hand of God to nurture the English church.

One of the perplexing issues surrounding Dowsing's iconoclasm for modern observers is why the 'cleansing' had to happen so quickly and so ferociously. The answer builds, beginning with Dowsing's deep plunge into the puritan rationale for Reformation. The dialectical nature of this puritan rationale excluded any thought of a safe middle ground on which Laudians and puritans could meet peacefully. What remained was one patch of land that must be claimed by one side or the other.

In sum, the corporate puritan rationale for Reformation can be described in terms of their self-perception. They stood in the centre of a cosmic battlefield. The unyielding threat of God's discipline was behind them. Their foreign and domestic enemies surrounded them. Just beyond the battlefield, however, lay an idealised Promised Land where pure worship never ceased to please God and worshipper alike. Dowsing followed the flow of this rationale with ink and pen before he entered the grounds of churches like Linstead Parva in April 1644.

The godly envisioned a future golden age when the schemes of the papists would finally cease and the godly would worship in a Reformed nation. Iconoclasm was a single effort with two outcomes. First it moved the English church closer to what the godly termed the 'patterne in the Mount'. Second it addressed tainted, Laudian worship with a sense of finality. Ultimately for Dowsing iconoclasm was not destruction. It meant liberation.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: The Significance of the Iconoclast

Dowsing once scribbled the makings of a sermon onto four sheets of paper and tucked them neatly into one of the volumes of sermons. As John Blatchly observed, Dowsing's writing is 'singularly difficult to decipher' in this case because it represents the penmanship of the iconoclast 'at its worst'.¹ The document stayed with the sermon collection through the centuries and is now folded and placed into a pocket following the final page of Volume III. It is unclear if these were notes Dowsing took while listening to a sermon, or if it was something he created himself. Regardless of the genesis of the document, it contains several telling phrases.

The notes appear to be a meditation on verses from Psalm 136 and Luke 17. Dowsing drew particular attention to verse 23 from Psalm 26, '[God] Who remembered us in our lowly state'. The central theme in the meditation is that victory comes from God whose 'mercy endures forever'. Dowsing writes of a God whose 'providence stands not on winds, his actions are not in [th]e creature but in his will'. As a former soldier, the thought that God 'delivers not by a disciplined army but by a company of raw [apprentices]' must have been humbling. There are other verses scattered through the notes, some of them striking. One reference either directed Dowsing to Proverbs 20.28 or Proverbs 10.28. The handwriting makes it difficult to be certain. The former verse would have had special significance for the country in the later 1640s: 'Mercy and truth preserve the king. And by mercy he upholds his throne'. The latter verse held meaning for the godly in the years following the civil war: 'The hope of the righteous will be gladness, but the expectations of the wicked will perish'. Either way, the iconoclast's thoughts were on current affairs. He wrote, 'Its dark before day, [the] greatest promises whe[n] [th]e Church is

¹ Blatchly, "Appendix 3," *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper. Dowsing's penmanship is indeed fiendish to read in this sample of his writing. The notations in the sermons are comparatively easy to decipher.

lowest'. The document also develops the idea that God's mercies often seduced his people to presume on his goodness by neglecting his holiness. The point is not unlike Edmund Calamy's argument in *Englands Looking Glasse* (1642), in which Dowsing marked a large number of passages. Dowsing also mimicked some of Calamy's characteristic enthusiasm for stark application when the iconoclast wrote, 'if his wrath come on these countrys, your unthankfullnes brings it'.² The thoughts in this brief manuscript reveal a mind focused on divine purposes in human events. The document demonstrates once again Dowsing's concern for the triumph of the godly Reformation. His iconoclasm grew out of a highly concentrated mixture of social, political and theological forces.

The aim of this project has been to construct a corporate rationale for iconoclasm from within the puritan movement, highlighting shared fears and aspirations for the church. The argument has been that William Dowsing possessed a coherent rationale for iconoclasm based on a series of ultimatums for the godly: divine retribution or divine blessing, military defeat or English security, renewed persecution or a godly triumph and tainted worship or pure worship. Iconoclasm played a tactical role by resolving a tension created by each ultimatum. The evidence examined to reconstruct Dowsing's rationale for iconoclasm has fallen into three overlapping categories in the course of the thesis: the puritan culture in Dowsing's home region of Suffolk, attitudes toward religious images in Dowsing's theological tradition and Dowsing's habits of reading and annotation. Each category partly explained how Dowsing's rationale for iconoclasm took shape or found reinforcement. As the study draws to a conclusion it is appropriate to revisit those categories in turn.

² The last two quotations are dependent upon Blatchly's transcription, provided to him by 'David and Marion Allen'. See *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, n. 6, p. 494

First, Dowsing's 'puritan identity' took shape in Suffolk, the land of his birth. There Puritanism flourished under the protection of local gentry and clergy. From an early age Dowsing associated with a group of people who shared a deep-seated commitment to the Reformation in England. He shared a fairly close relationship with influential puritans who affected local and national politics. The terms 'puritan' or 'godly' have served as shorthand for this loosely organised movement. The rationale for iconoclasm found reinforcement in the godly community, known for its intractable commitment to Reformed Orthodoxy, providentialism, biblicism and anti-popery.

Second, Dowsing inherited a brand of Reformed Orthodoxy with long-settled convictions about the place of images in worship. Tracing their roots to the pristine era of the early church, but more recently to the generation of Calvin and Knox, zealous adherents to this Calvinist theology sought to rid the English church of 'monuments of superstition' by applying the second commandment through what came to be known as the regulative principle. Concerns for the Gospel gave greater urgency to iconoclasm than did anxiety over any lone commandment. The regulative principle emerged out of a larger campaign to maintain the purity of the Gospel in the preached Word.

The Reformed 'thesis' met its 'antithesis' in the Laudianism of the 1630s. In the years of Charles I's Personal Rule (1629-1640), Calvinists sustained attacks from Arminians, the Reformed brotherhood felt threatened by a rejuvenated ecclesiastical hierarchy and many simplified worship spaces gave way to 'the beauty of holiness'. In that decade, Reformed theologians and preachers honed their response to Laudianism through what Peter Lake has called a series of 'binary oppositions'. Rather than as an artificial rubric for interpreting the

world, puritans in the 1640s saw the impasse between Reformed 'truth' and Laudian 'popery' as a vestige of the cosmic struggle between Christ and Antichrist.

The examination of Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign showed that Dowsing received his orders from both Parliament and Pentateuch. During the campaign, the reality on the ground did not always correspond perfectly to the lofty ideals in Reformed Orthodoxy. Practical concerns, such as the sheer number of churches in Suffolk, meant Dowsing only partially marked many 'monuments of superstition' and left many more untouched. This was hardly the idealised 'grinding into dust' which Moses performed at Sinai. Just as T.S. Eliot wrote of the shadow that so often falls between an idea and reality, the godly community must have lamented the shadow between the ferocious preaching that filled the halls of Westminster and the reality of incomplete application in the churches. Yet the campaign itself was part of the Herculean effort to establish Calvin's concept of 'spiritual worship' over and against Laudian icons in wood and stone.

Third, Dowsing's reading habits were important to his reception of the iconoclastic rationale. His interests were not limited to theological discourse, but encompassed tastes ranging from Francis Quarles' poetry to Sir Walter Raleigh's prosaic historical accounts. Yet even these broader interests seemed to serve his understanding of how God worked in the world around him. His encyclopaedic familiarity with John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* allowed him to link historical events with their spiritual significance. His library also gave him an inside glimpse into issues facing the Long Parliament at the beginning of the 1640s. Dowsing read and annotated many works which exposed the dangers of worship tainted by human innovation. The most notable of these works was his six-volume collection of sermons delivered to the Long Parliament in the 1640s. These sermons unfolded a series of dialectics for the reading iconoclast. The result of the dialectics was the perception that the godly stood between two

competing realities. One reality promised divine retribution, continued persecution against the godly, military defeat and a system of idolatrous worship in the English church. The alternative was a reality marked by divine blessing, the triumph of the godly cause, a secure Commonwealth and a God-honouring system of worship. In many ways, parliamentary preachers believed that iconoclasm was necessary to secure the more desirable reality.

This project has infrequently presented the arguments of those who opposed the godly program of reform. This has been intentional. It reflects a reality in the 1640s (and beyond), which was that counterarguments served, in large part, only to sharpen already established convictions. Parliamentary preachers answered ‘objections’ to their ‘doctrines’ in a way that made their point even more self-evident. On the local church level, the personal meanings which parishioners might have ascribed to religious images were not taken into account when iconoclasts set out to apply the second commandment. In fact, it was the refusal to weigh the benefits of patient progress and careful reform that has marked Dowsing’s brand of puritan iconoclasm. However, in the godly view, iconoclasm was a critical rescue effort. Superstitious Christians needed liberation from idols so their affections could move from foolishness to wisdom, from Dagon to the divine. In the godly community, the iconoclastic ordinances of 1641, 1643 and 1644 amounted to one large theological proclamation of emancipation.

On one level William Dowsing was a minor figure who joined the rank and file of the parliamentary army, only for the Earl of Manchester to assign him the impossible task of ‘cleansing’ the churches. He associated with influential figures but he was not an innovative thinker and he did not affect decisions in the halls of power. In fact, after the period of his iconoclasm ended he faded back into obscurity with no discernable impact on current events. Dowsing died in 1668, eight years after the Restoration coronation of Charles II. John

Morrill surmises that, following the extraordinary events of the 1640s, ‘Dowsing’s life ebbed away in disillusion at a cause betrayed and lost’.³

On another level, figures like Dowsing are indispensable to understanding the puritan movement in the civil war. Dowsing acts as a window through which modern observers can view the anxieties of the laity, those who were often swept up in policies created well outside their sphere of influence. An enthusiastic participant in the puritan cause, Dowsing also shows that doctrines preached to the House of Commons resonated in the houses of common people. As Dowsing read along with the parliamentary preachers he constantly received a dialectical treatment of the world that made iconoclasm seem like a moral imperative.

This examination of William Dowsing’s reception of the iconoclastic rationale points to a need for broader research into how the laity understood theological discourse in the seventeenth century. There is certainly a warrant for further study of the kinds of books and tracts lay people read. But perhaps more significantly, there is a need to understand the content of those books and how the laity appropriated what they read. For example, simply noting that puritans enjoyed reading ‘sermons’ misses the crucial component of what doctrines made those sermons attractive to the godly community. Furthermore, a dissection of the form and rhetorical structure of popular literature can overlook core beliefs for which form and rhetoric were merely effective conduits. Unless researchers come to terms with the doctrines and ideologies that filled the thoughts of the influential and the influenced alike, actions like Dowsing’s iconoclasm will remain mysterious.

Those separated chronologically and ideologically from the corporate puritan rationale for iconoclasm may find it difficult to understand the anxiety created by seemingly benign religious images. Keith Thomas translated the dilemma for puritans into modern imagery:

³ Morrill, “Dowsing, William (bap. 1596, d. 1668),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

For it would be almost impossible for us to appreciate an artefact, however exquisite, if we found its symbolic overtones too repugnant. What would we do if we were given, say, a beautifully carved and bejewelled swastika? Would we give it a place of honour in our sitting room? Or would we ... throw it into our local equivalent of the brook Kidron? Perhaps the gulf separating us from the Tudor and Stuart iconoclasts is narrower than we think.⁴

Monday 4 April, 1644 was indeed a day of destruction in the quiet parish church of Linstead Parva. The group of men who entered the grounds under the leadership of William Dowsing believed they had come to free England from what many puritans perceived to be the yoke of idolatry. It was a violent visit, but not a mindless mission. In the hours surrounding his visit to the church, Dowsing read the text of a sermon by Stephen Marshall. In that encounter, the preacher's words reminded the iconoclast that he was in Linstead Parva 'for the Lord Christ and the purity of religion'. Marshall further charged his reader: 'Goe on therefore, I beseech you all and carry on the worke [of Reformation], and for your encouragement, remember and observe how the Lord your God goeth before you, observe him in all his goings, how he watcheth over you every day'.⁵

Dowsing was a zealous man in an equally zealous age. Eagerness for Reformation and for pure worship drove him through Suffolk and Cambridgeshire in 1643-1644. Broken statues and defaced inscriptions were natural by-products of an 'active' theology in the hands of one of history's more kinetic puritans.

⁴ Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm," p. 40.

⁵ Marshall, *A Sacred Panegyrick* (1644), p. 20.

Appendix One

William Dowsing's Parliamentary Sermon Reading (1641-1644) Before and During the Iconoclastic Campaign*

* The sermons included in this chart are those: 1) on which Dowsing recorded a precise reading date; 2) whose dates fall either before or during the iconoclastic campaign. Chapter Six examines these sermons as well as additional sermons believed to have been read by the iconoclast during this period. This judgment was based on Dowsing's habit of reading the sermon within six months of the purchase date.

Date (year beginning 1 January)	Dowsing's Reading for the Day** (with the location in the current order of Dowsing's volumes)	Text Preached	Noteworthy Annotations on Title Page	Historical Context of Dowsing's Reading***
28 March 1641	Stephen Marshall's <i>A Sermon Preached</i> (IV.9)	II Chronicles 15.2	'Luther', 'The Lord's supper polluted', 'it onely took an ounce of the golden calf to bring vengeance'	In December of the previous year Parliament charged William Laud with treason. On 23 January 1641, Commons passed an ordinance calling for the destruction of religious images. When he read this sermon Dowsing was living in the pro- puritan Stour Valley, having recently suffered the death of his first wife Thamar Lea. On 29 March, Commons voted to forbid Bishops from taking places in Parliament. 20 May brought the execution of the Earl of Stratford on Tower Hill.
8 September 1641	William Bridge's <i>Babylons Downfall</i> (IV.4)	Revelation 14.8	'Luther' (twice), '[Edward] Deering', 'Englands suspension of ministers', 'Austen [Augustine]', 'Latimer', and 'Zanchy [Zanchius]'	On 28 September, Commons made its first call for the removal of Laudian innovations. In October of this year, Irish Catholics broke out in rebellion leading to the death of large numbers of Protestants. Tensions rose between Parliament and Charles

				I over the king's handling of the rebellion. In November, led by John Pym, Commons delivered the Grand Remonstrance to the king. Three months later (20 January), Dowsing and Matthew Newcomen signed a petition addressed to Commons calling for immediate reform of worship in England.
9 October 1642	Stephen Marshall's <i>Meroz Cursed</i> (IV.13)	Judges 5.23	'Luther' (twice), 'Beza', 'Fox', and 'the power of prayer'	Dowsing read these sermons two months after the king raised his standard at Nottingham, effectively beginning the civil war.
10 October 1642	Edmund Calamy's <i>Gods Free Mercy to England</i> (IV.12)	Ezekiel 36.32	'King James', 'Ignatius', 'of Solomon building Gods house', 'the Lords day'	
1 November 1642	Thomas Case's <i>Two Sermons Lately Preached</i> (IV.6-7)	Ezekiel 20.5 Ezra 10.23	'Calvin' (twice), 'sudden passions and temptations...we must watch out for them'	Parliament had recently suffered a defeat at the Battle of Edgehill (23 October). In December, the king created a makeshift Parliament in Oxford, which would serve as his capital during the war.
18 December 1642	Richard Vines' <i>Calebs Integrity in Following the Lord Fully</i> (IV.28)	Numbers 14.24	'Religion & ceremonies'	During this period Dowsing lived and worshipped in the puritan stronghold of Dedham parish.
27 December 1642	Charles Herle's <i>A Prayer of Compasses for Church and State</i> (IV.29)	Zechariah 8.19		
8 March 1643	Simeon Ashe's <i>The Best Refuge for the Most Oppressed</i> (IV.14)	Psalm 9.9	'p[r]elates the cause of all our mischife', 'old ceremonies', 'sacraments profaned', 'Ireland', 'idle holy days', 'scandlous p[re]lates', 'opposio[n]s'	Two days before reading this sermon, Dowsing drafted a letter to Matthew Newcomen asking him to use his influence with 'parliament men' to bring an end to idolatry in England. On 24 March the Welsh Infantry surrendered to parliamentary forces, marking an enormous setback for Royalists.
24 March 1643	Stephen Marshall's <i>A Peace Offering to God</i> (II.3)	Psalm 124.6-8	'none but the godly can truly praise god',	

			‘mercies for ye plimnt’, ‘ministry not purged’, ‘pliamnt less zealous in Gods then in their owne’, ‘pliamnt calld Grasshoppers’, ‘more mercies in one year than in 80y.’	<p>On 28 March, Charles rejected proposals for peace.</p> <p>During this period, the annotations in Dowsing’s collection of sermons become more precise. He more frequently included the purchase and reading dates and went to greater lengths to emphasize effective passages in the sermons. Perhaps events surrounding the civil war added to his already considerable zeal.</p>
24 March 1643	Joseph Caryl’s <i>The Works of Ephesus Explained</i> (IV.16)	Revelation 2.2-3	‘Ireland’	
25 March 1643	Robert Harris’ <i>A Sermon Preached</i> (IV.17)	Luke 18.6-8	‘Luther’ ‘1000 oaths & lies’, ‘God’s patience’	
25 March 1643	Obadiah Sedgwick’s <i>Englands Preservation</i> (IV.18)	Jeremiah 4.3	‘T[e]nder conscience Lord’s day’ ‘11 evils to be reformed’, ‘Luther’, ‘a sad story of a woman’, ‘Idolatry’	
26 March 1643	Thomas Temple’s <i>Christs Government in and over His People</i> (IV.26)	Psalms 2.6	‘ye church where xt [Christ] sits and reigne[s] as King must be a holy church’	
26 March 1643	Thomas Hodges’ <i>A Glimpse of Gods Glory</i> (IV.25)	Psalms 113.5-6	‘God is invisible imortal o[n]ly wise’, ‘Reformation’ ‘unworthy ministers’	
4 April 1643	Thomas Valentine’s <i>A Sermon Preached</i> (IV.31)	Zephaniah 3.8		
5 April 1643	Edmund Calamy’s <i>Englands Looking Glasse</i> (IV.11)	Jeremiah 18.7-10	‘Buckets to draw out tares [tears]’, ‘Adultry & douet [doubt?]’, ‘Reason to sorrow for little sins’, ‘divisions bring enemies’ ‘Luther’, ‘Calvin’ ‘Diogenes’ ‘God’s minsters taken away’	

5 April 1643	Thomas Wilson's <i>Jereicho's Downfall</i> (IV.24)	Hebrews 11.30		
13 April 1643	William Carter's <i>Israels Peace with God, Benjamins Overthrow</i> (IV.23)	Judges 20.26-28	'independa[n]t'	
19 April 1643	William Sedgwick's <i>Zions Deliverance and Her Friends Duty</i> (IV.20)	Isaiah 62.7		
28 April 1643	John Arrowsmith's <i>The Covenant-avenging Sword Brandished</i> (VI.2)	Matthew 10.34	'Ireland', 'Melancto [Melanchthon]'	
2 May 1643	Jeremiah Whittaker's <i>Eirenpoios, Christ the Settlement of Unsettled Times</i> (VI.3)	Haggai 2.7	'Divisions not to hinder reformation', Englands cure for Bable'	Two months later (1 July), the Westminster Assembly convened to discuss the reform of the English church.
9 August 1643	John Ley's <i>The Fury of Warre, the Folly of Sin</i> (VI.8)	Jeremiah 4.21-22	'parliament of England wronged', 'sabbath profaned', 'against idolatry' 'Mr.Perkins'	In this month, Commons signed the Solemn League and Covenant with Scotland. The Earl of Manchester appointed Dowsing provost marshal of the Eastern Association armies. On 28 August, Commons passed a second ordinance calling for the 'utter destruction' of 'superstitious images'.
10 September 1643	Andrew Perne's <i>Gospell Courage</i> (VI.10)	Micah 4.5	'cheapside crosse'	The previous May, 'Cheapside Cross' has been 'pulled down'. On 7 September the House of Lords considered the Solemn League and Covenant. Dowsing served as provost marshal on 16 September as Manchester led the Eastern Association Army to victory at King's Lynn (Norfolk).
10 September 1643	Thomas Hill's <i>The Trade of Truth Advanced</i> (IV.21)	Proverbs 23.23	'Luther', 'Lord's Day', 'Mr Perkins', '4 Reformers', 'divine worship costs much'	

17 September 1643	Sidrach Simpson's <i>Reformations Preservation</i> (VI.16)	Isaiah 4.5	'pliamt men to reform themselves', 'Rules for Reformatio[n]'	General Essex led parliamentary forces to victory at the First Battle of Newbury on 20 September. John Pym died on 8 December. Also in December, Manchester commissioned Dowsing to carry out the ordinance of 28 August. Dowsing's iconoclastic campaign began in Cambridge on 21 December.
24 January 1644	Thomas Goodwin's <i>Zerubbabels Encouragement to Finish the Temple</i> (IV.15)	Zechariah 4.6-9	'An image of Peter Fall down at Rome'	Within a week after reading this sermon, Dowsing recorded visits to churches in 'Aldborough', 'Orford', 'Snape', 'Stanstead', 'Saxmundham', 'Kelshall', 'Carleton', 'Franham', 'Stratford', 'Wickham', 'Sudburne', 'Ufford', 'Woodbridge', 'Kesgrave', 'Rushmere', 'Chatsham', 'Washbrook', 'Cobdock', 'Belstead', 'Ipswich', 'Mary's at the Key', 'St. Mary Elmes', 'Nicholas', 'Matthew's', 'Mary's at the Tower', 'Margarett's', 'Stephen's', 'Laurence', 'Clements' and 'Helens'
4 April 1644	Stephen Marshall's A <i>Sacred Panegyrick</i> (II.13)	I Chronicles 12.38-40	'rules for feasting'	Within a week after reading this sermon, Dowsing recorded visits to churches in 'Wilby', 'Stradbrook', 'Linstead Parva', 'Linstead Magna', 'Chedeston', 'Hallisworth', 'Redsham Magna', 'Reginfield', 'Beckles', 'Elough', 'Saterly', 'Benacre', 'Cothie', 'Rushmere',

				‘Mutford’, ‘Frostenden’, ‘Coe’, ‘Rayden’, ‘Southould’, ‘Walberwick’, ‘Blyford’, ‘Blyborough’, ‘Dunwich’, ‘Allhallows’, ‘Bramfield’, and ‘Heveningham’. On 9 May of this year Parliament passes a further ordinance for the destruction of ‘superstitious images’.
14 June 1644	Thomas Young’s <i>Hopes Encouragement Pointed at in a Sermon Preached</i> (V.4)	Psalms 31.24	‘abuse of sacraments’	There are no recorded church visits for this date or surrounding dates, even though it falls within the period of the campaign.
12 July 1644	Thomas Case’s <i>The Root of Apostasy</i> (II.15)	Daniel 11.32	‘A king loose his crowne in ye water’	Ten days before Dowsing read this sermon, parliamentary forces secured a decisive victory over the Royalists at Marston Moor, marking a turning point in the war. Five days after reading this sermon, Dowsing entered his hometown (Laxfield, Suffolk) and visited the church in which he was baptized.

** Information compiled from John Blatchly’s chart in “Appendix 3,” *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, John Wilson, “Appendix Two,” *Pulpit in Parliament*, and my own study of Dowsing’s collection.

*** Information compiled from P.R. Newman, *Atlas of the English Civil War*, Wanklyn and Jones, *A Military History of the English Civil War*, Keith Lindley, *The English Civil War and Revolution: A Sourcebook*, Trevor The *Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. Cooper, Edward Razzell, *The English Civil War: A Contemporary Account* (Volumes 2 and 3). See Works Cited section for full bibliographic information.

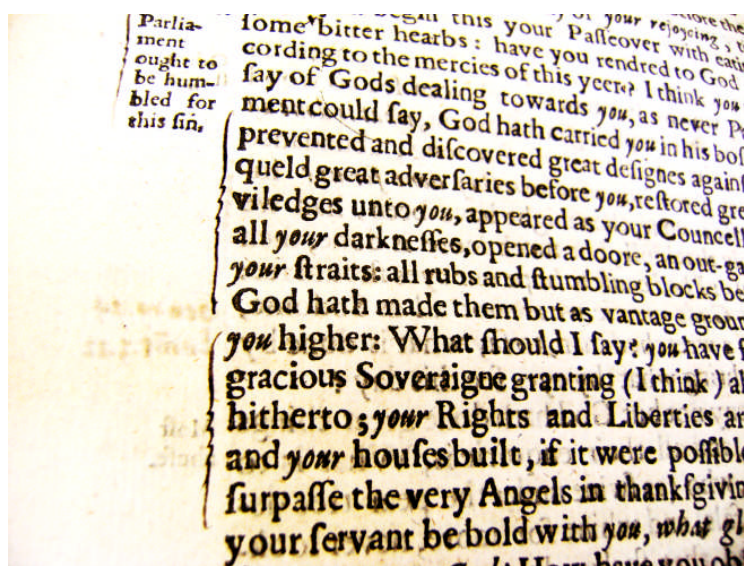
Appendix Two

Below are samples of Dowsing's method of annotation.* The iconoclast tended to mark passages with simple lines in the margin and brief summaries of the passages. The images also capture Dowsing's habit of adding (or completing) Scripture references.

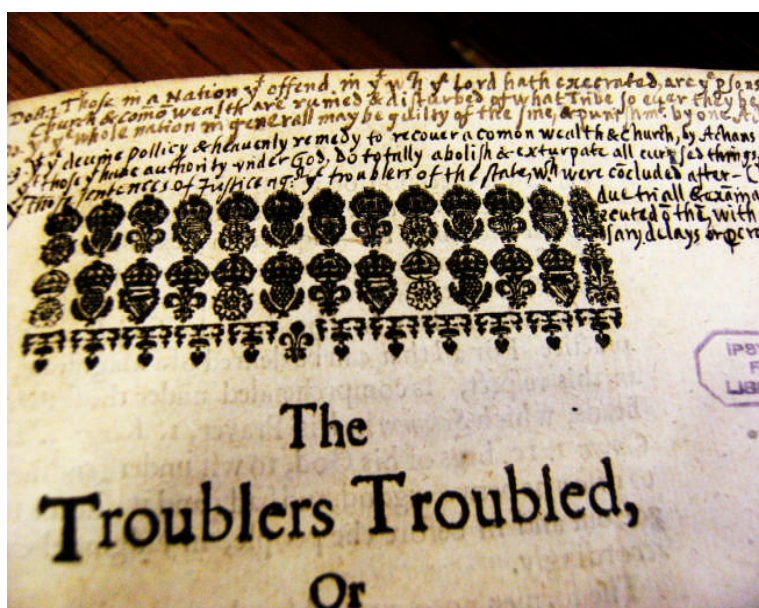
*Dowsing's sermons remain in the Headmaster's Library of the Ipswich School in Suffolk. The images are my own and are printed here with permission from John Blatchly, Archivist for the Ipswich School. The modern volume numbers are different to Dowsing's original numbering (See also "Appendix 3" in *The Journal of William Dowsing*, pp. 327-329):

Current Volume Number	Dowsing's Number	Contents
I	5	Sermons Preached the House of Lords, 1644-46
II	6	Thanksgiving Sermons, 1640-46
III	4	Fast Sermons, Lord and Commons, 1644-46
IV	1	Fast Sermons, House of Commons, 1640-42
V	3	Fast Sermons, House of Commons, 1643-44
VI	2	Fast sermons, House of Commons, 1642-43

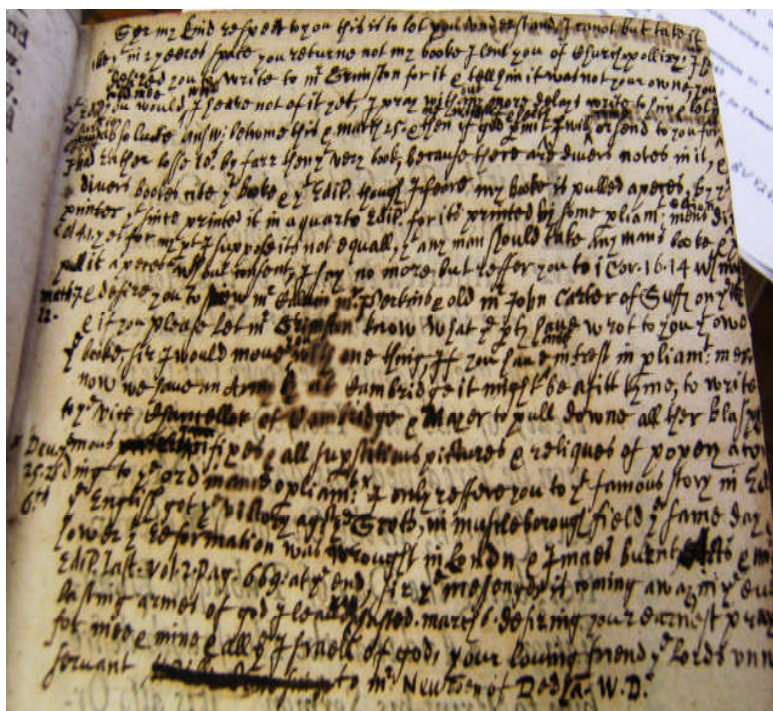
All notes in the thesis refer to the current volume numbers.



Two marked passages in Stephen Marshall's *A Peace Offering to God*, II.3.42. The section includes Marshall's warning that 'Parliament ought to be humbled for [their] sin'. See 6.III.i for a discussion of this sermon.



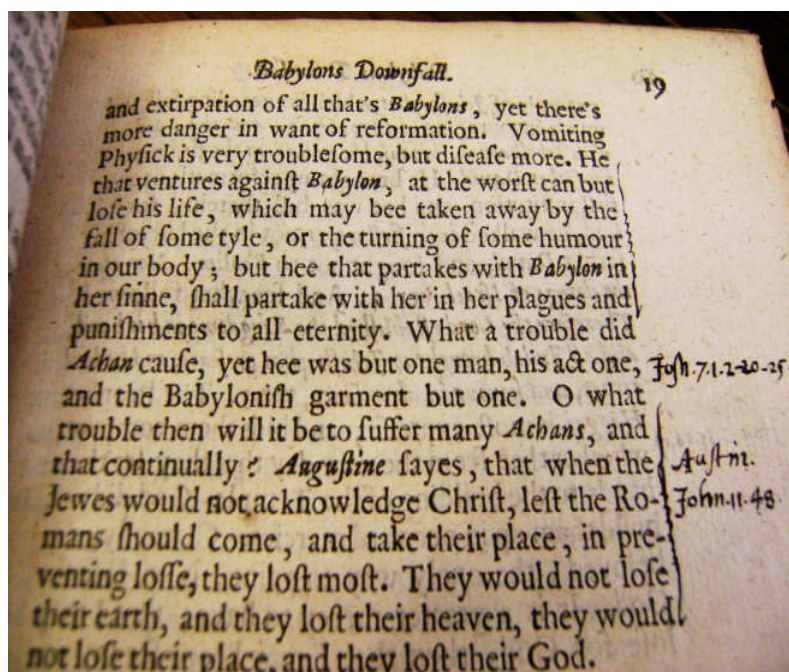
Dowsing wrote the major doctrines on the title page of most of the sermons, including Samuel Fairclough's *Troublers Troubled*, IV.1. See 6.I for a discussion of this sermon.



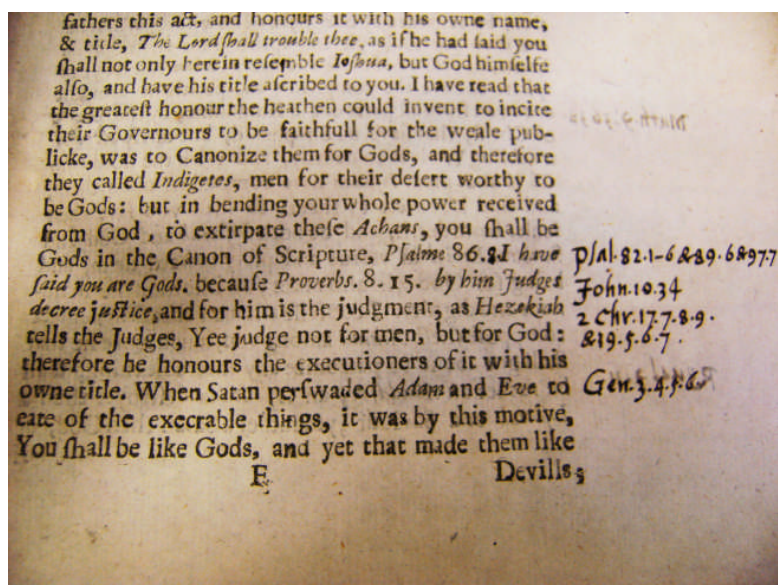
Dowsing copied his letter to Matthew Newcomen on a blank page after reading John Arrowsmith's *The Covenant-avenging Sword Brandished*, VI.2. See 6.I (note 2) for a discussion of this sermon.

Beginning line 1: Syr, my kind respect to you. This is to let you understand I canot but take it ille [tha]t in 2 years you returne not my booke I lent you of Church Policy...

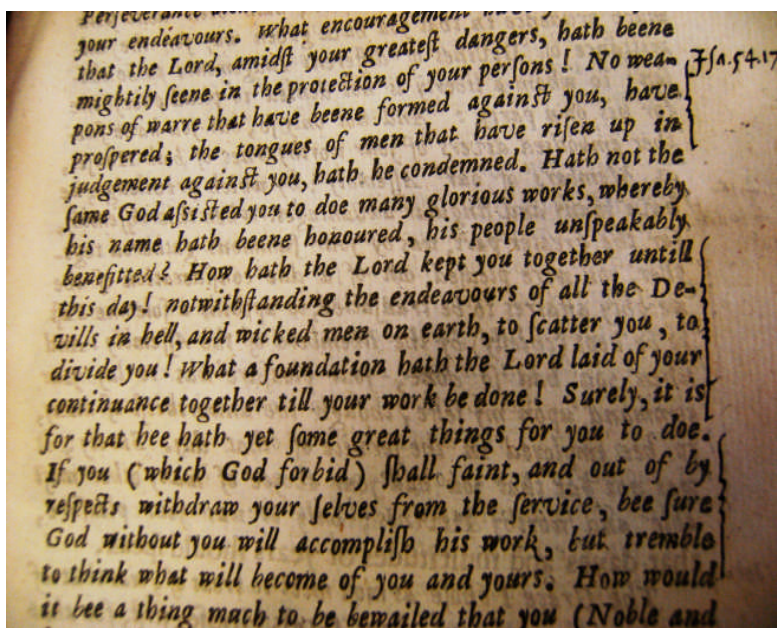
Beginning line 13 (mid): Sir, if you have anie interest in parliament men, now we have an army at Cambridge it might be a fitte tyme to write to [th]e Vice Chancellor of Cambridge & Mayor to pull down all ther blasphemous crucifixes, all superstitious pictures and reliques of popery according to [th]e ordinances of[f] parliament. I only reffere you to [tha]t famous story in Ed. reign, how the English got the victory against the Scots in Muselborough the same day & hower the reformation was wrought in London and images burnt, A & M [Acts and Monuments] edit. last.



The notes in the margin refer to these marked passages in William Bridge's *Babylons Downfall*, IV.4.19. He often took special notice of theologians such as Augustine of Hippo. Dowsing also adds the corresponding chapter and verse when the preacher mentions a biblical event in passing. See 6.II for a discussion of this sermon.



Dowsing continues his Scripture annotation in *Troublers Troubled*.



One of the three passages on this page includes the warning, 'If you (which God forbid) shall faint, and out of by respects withdraw yourselves from the service, bee sure that God without you will accomplish his work, but tremble to think what will become of you and yours'.

Appendix Three

Images of an Eighteenth Century Transcript of Dowsing's Journal (Edward Leeds, 1704)*

* Images provided by the staff of Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BE. The images are reproduced here with permission. This transcript of Dowsing's Journal is held under the call number MS SAL 702.



The cover of the 1704 transcript of Dowsing's journal

A True Copy of a Manuscript found in the Library of
 Sam: Dowsing of Stratford being written by his father W:
 Dowsing own hand; and afterwards sold to M: Huse a
 bookseller at Exeter change in the Strand London amongst
 other Books & papers: Sep: 6 1704 &c
 By Virtue of a warrant directed to me by the right Hon: Earl
 of Manchester: I do hereby Depute & appoint you in my
 absence to execute the said Warrant in every particular within
 the County of according to an Ordinance of
 Parliament therein mentioned and power given unto me by
 the said Warrant as fully as I my self may or might execute
 the same In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand
 and Seal &c
 William Dowsing substitutes Mr: Blomfeild of Aspsall Stotham
 for Mayhem & Gifford Tho: Lunning & Tho: Wadhop & Thundon
 a goodly man & Tho: Glandfield of Gifford; Francis Vernon for
 Wainford Juthelham Blything Rosemore Juelway Clare
 Merdum Blackmore & would have had Harbmore
 and Francis Jessup of Beccles for Loughingland Mulford and
 Bungay Blythburgh Goxford & Ringshall
 A: Haveril In Itself In January the 6: 1643 wee broke
 down about one hundred superstitious pictures and seven Images
 huying a Nunne and the picture of God & Christ and severall others
 & very superstitious and two hundred had been broke down before
 I came Wee take away two popish Inscriptions with Ora: pro
 Nobis & wee beat down a great stoning cross on the top of the
 Church &c

The first page of the journal stating: "A True Copy of a Manuscript found in the Library of Sam[uel] Dowsing of Stratford being written by his father W[illiam] Dowsing's own hand ..."

72 at Cornard Magna Feb: the 20 1643 I took up two
 Inscriptions pray for our souls & gave & gave order to take
 down a cross on the steeple & to level the steps John
 Cain churchwarden for not paying & doing his duty
 Injoynd by the ordinance I charged Henry Tanner
 Constable to carry him before the Earl of Manchester
 73 at Little Cornard Feb: 20 There were two crosses on
 in Wood & one in Stone which I gave order to take
 them down & I broke down six superstitious pictures
 but I had no Noble
 74 at Newton Feb: the 21 W^m Plume churchwarden and
 John Shrive Constable I broke down four superstitious
 Pictures one of Christ and of the Virgin Mary and to
 see that the steps levelled
 75 At Kington Wee broke down forty Pictures one of God the
 father & the other very superstitious & orders to level the
 Chancel and to take a cross of the steeple James Springs
 Constable May 1643 Feb: 21 Henry Hill and Henry
 Campin churchwardens above Vengover Constable the
 churchwardens promised the G^d within a week
 76 at M^r Tho: Hamberfeld I broke down nine superstitious
 Pictures & a crucifix in the parish of Stoke he refused to
 pay the G^d this was in Lord Windsors Chapel
 77 Feb: 23 at Capt: Walgraves Chapel in Buxer a Picture
 of God the father and twenty other superstitious Pictures which
 they promised to break himself was not at home nor could
 they find the key of the chapel nor paid the G^d &c

Entries 72-77 of Dowsing's journal

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